

[<<Back](#)

11/11/2008

**Libby's Cafe**

Posted: Nov 11, 2008 09:47 AM

Updated: Nov 11, 2008 09:47 AM

O.K., I confess...I am a bit smitten with the newest hot spot in town. Normally, I shy away from the "scene", for fear it is not about a new culinary rage, but more of a "happening" socially.

In the case of Libby's on Osprey Ave., (just across from my favorite gourmet store- Morton's Market) they have managed to create both. While I had not been a fan of the former restaurant since chefs Darwin Santa Maria and Malin Parker moved on many years back, I now find myself re-energized with the opening of what proves to be THE destination for dining. Add the name Fran Casciato to the future chef hall of fame. This chef delivers, not only with an impressive resume on paper, but with his style and flare for respecting each ingredient and profiling a farm fresh attitude paired with the Seidensticker's family culinary roots. While most restaurants are a ghost town right now, Libby's is packing them in- and I mean packing, whether it is a Tuesday night or Saturday, the high energy is there. (As is the noise, so be prepared) Nevertheless, what is overwhelmingly surprising is that with all that energy, Libby's is coming through with creative, flavorful dishes that this town desperately needed. The menu is large in content, perhaps almost too large but they really do give each dish what seems to be undivided attention. The Peachtree Farms deviled eggs with Mote Marine American Sturgeon Caviar- were clearly a table favorite with a nice hit of spice. Being the salad connoisseur that I have aptly dubbed myself, I just had to try the Asian Pear Salad and the Libby's Vegetable Chop. The sherried- fig vinaigrette dressed the Asian Pear Salad perfectly on this light dish and the salad is certainly large enough to share, as are most dishes. The jury is still out on the Maytag bleu cheese beignets, which are one of the components, but I am certainly willing to give them another go. Our server graciously noted the Vegetable Chop is not your "ordinary chop", prepared with house roasted truffled seasonal organic vegetables kissed with lemon and dusted with shaved Reggiano.

It is rich and filling and perhaps a luxury that I plan to enjoy repeatedly on future visits. In fact, Libby's offers such a wide variety of both small plate and full entrees it will be hard not to make this a bi-weekly stop. Friends have raved about the Gulf Coast Rock Shrimp Tempura, which is now on my "short list" of must try dishes, right after I go for another order of truffled wild mushroom torte with balsamic syrup. The earthy aroma of truffle arrived at the table before the dish itself, inspiring our tastebuds almost immediately. Nightly specials might include my husband's new favorite; an enormous serving of Kobe meatloaf with a fried egg atop and mashed potatoes- comfort food Sarasota style. What truly put its mark on what Libby's Café is all about however is the Florida Snapper Fillet with Whitewater Clam Pan Roast. The dish just tasted superb. Smokiness from apple wood bacon enhanced the ocean clam sweet butter that expertly complimented the fresh fish. The sautéed fresh spinach with garlic which quite often is a mere afterthought, stood out on the plate with a clean and defined statement of deliciously prepared.

AND NOW MORE OF A GOOD THING! Libby's has recently opened for lunch. Stay tuned as I plan to lunch with a few friends later this week!

A quick note: Jump into the homemade biscuits as soon as they are served, (Grandma Libby's original family recipe) and end with her mile high chocolate cake. Do not panic if you cannot decide what to order, there is always tomorrow for more good food. Sophisticated décor makes the place feel more comfortable and the new L Bar is a quiet respite to the buzz of the bar

scene.

A toast to Libby's! For new kids on the block they really have this critic's accolades!



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2009 WorldNow and WWSB. All Rights Reserved.  
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).