

Steveston gets a dollop of Tapenade



Steveston wears many hats. A fishing village, a tourist destination, a residential neighbourhood, a community.

Those of us who have been here long enough have watched the changes, including the development of Bayview Street back in 1990.

We've watched the sign on the building on the north side of the street go

from Sleigh's to Delgado's and now to the sparkling new Tapenade Bistro.

Owner Vince Morlet once worked as a waiter at Sleigh's and other establishments along Bayview. Over 18 years, Vince, a Steveston High grad, worked at a variety of locations, including Ouest in Vancouver. He even tried the corporate world, but he always held on to his dream of having his own restaurant one day.

Jan. 1, 2003, that dream came true and Vince opened the doors Jan. 22 to the smell of drying paint.

"Tapenade is not like the old place," says Vince. "We are totally new."

Along with his Brazilian wife, Juliana, Vince has fashioned a French/Italian bistro. "We've taken Juliana's French side, my Italian side and created what I call a Stevestonized urban twist," explains Vince. "If I had to sum it up, I'd say we are an urban

bistro in the heart of the village."

Vince called in designer Davide Merino (who did Clin Clin on Robson and Araxis in Whistler) to create Mediterranean ambiance. The resulting warm mango-coloured walls and cascading drapery transport you to another world.

Penny Peake and I found refuge at a corner table while the world outside cheered on the Canucks. Instead of ordering off the menu, we asked our waiter, Tony, to have chef, Liesa MacLeod, take charge.

We ate family-style, pacing ourselves through Burrowing Owl's Pinot Gris and samplings of pesto bocconcini with balsamic reduction, goat cheese in prosciutto with warm spinach and fresh basil, Sambuca mussels, Nicoise salad with grilled ahi-tuna, breast of duck with blood orange and grappa jus, wild coho salmon with lavender chive beurre blanc and chive flowers, and to finish it off, a dessert platter with chocolate orange pot de crème, toffee pie, and poached ricotta pear.

Penny and I felt as satisfied as the Canuck fans.

Open seven days a week for lunchtime salads, crepes and panini's, for dinner appetizers/tapas and main entrees, and for weekend brunch, Tapenade may be what Steveston is looking for.

"I see the demographics shifting to a Kits/Granville Island setting," Vince says. "And I want to bring that feeling here so residence don't have to drive downtown to get that urban style of dining. This is also a place where you can just enjoy a coffee and dessert while reading the paper."

Right now, he says, people are walking in to make a reservation, asking "What's this place called?" Tapenade. 604-275-5188.

Oh yeah. "Look at the photographs," Penny says as we leave. And then check out Vince's family photographs in the function room (seats a group of 14 or so).

Food for Thought

Ariene Kroeker

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