



Vincent Morlet of the Tapenade Bistro in Steveston shows a selection from the restaurant's ample wine list. Five to six reds or whites are available by the glass, along with sangria. BILL KEAY PHOTO/VANCOUVER SUN

■ IN THE SUBURBS

Mediterranean flavours brighten winter in Steveston

BY CASSANDRA ANDERTON

Steveston in the summer is a popular destination with its fishing boats and fish and chips. Parking is at a premium then, so head out there now for a peaceful experience.

We went for carols one evening and found ourselves in need of some dinner.

Trading our usual fish and chip fare for a Mediterranean bistro experience, we decided to hit Tapenade Bistro.

A bright yellow room decorated with French wine posters and rustic wooden furniture lends a comfortable welcome. Water came right away and our server was quick to bring us fresh bread with butter, reviewing the nightly specials.

Sangria is available, and there's a good selection of scotch. Tapenade has a decent wine list with five to six reds or whites available by the glass. The first wine was corked, but the situation was quickly remedied and the glass of wine replaced without any fuss. The server was on her game.

The namesake dish of the restaurant, olive tapenade, was ripe with fresh olive flavour and just a hint of

anchovy. Mussels arrived in a saffron cream sauce containing slices of a crunchy fennel bulb. They were delicious and plump, but missed the saffron touch promoted on the menu.

I suggested trying the tapas trio. We selected artichokes, smoked trout and garlic glazed mushrooms. The vegetables are fresh and crunchy and the trout toned down with caramelized onion, garlic and carrot.

Mains include bouillabaisse, pork tenderloin, seared ahi tuna, braised lamb shank and New York steak. We ordered spice crusted ivory salmon and a chicken fricassee with truffle cream.

The salmon was flawlessly cooked and served on a lemon risotto with fresh broccoli rapini and grilled peppers. The chicken was tender, but the accompanying vegetables were overcooked and the truffles undetectable.

Dessert was a toss up between warm apple crepes or chocolate whisky torte.

We chose the torte and we were pleased when it arrived warm, with

lavender *crème anglaise* and three berry coulis.

Throughout the night, the water and bread were attentively refilled. A stream of locals, obviously well known to the staff, eagerly cleaned their plates. Their private room for 15 could come in handy and the patio seats 60 if we were to face the crowds and return in the summer.

■ TAPENADE BISTRO

3711 Bayview St., Richmond
Phone: 604-275-5188
Website: www.tapenade.ca

Prices are reasonable with most mains under \$20, appetizers under \$9 and the tapenade trio three for \$12.

7 Days a Week
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Dinner from 5 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday:
Brunch & Lunch from 11 a.m.
Dinner from 5 p.m.