

The Abbey in Tucson

Written by Ashley Pearlstein

The Abbey in Tucson, owned by restaurateur Brian Metzger, takes simple comfort foods and evolves them into a palette-pleasing meal that will knock you off your feet. The restaurant's interior, filled with bookshelves, cozy booths, a chalkboard overhead for specials, and candles on every table, encompasses modern sophistication. With upbeat, rock-and-roll type tunes playing and the chatter of pleased customers filling your



ears, the ambiance is a perfect match for the food.

Upon arrival, guests are greeted by a friendly staff member and served truffled popcorn and pumpernickel bread with golden raisins and a touch of salt, creating the perfect combination of salty and sweet. The Abbey's signature cocktail, "Holy Water," goes great with the first snacks. Made of orange vodka, citrus gin, and fresh "triple juice," the sweet drink will have a non-drinker ordering two.

Each day, Executive Chef Virginia "Ginny" Wooters, creates a homemade soup. The hearty Chicken n' Vegetables soup, made with corn, garlic, potatoes, and jalapeno, adds a southwestern flare to the typical chicken and vegetable soup. Ginny's Artichoke Dip, baked and served with Parmesan crostini, is a great way to kick off an amazing meal.

The Seared Sea Scallops are served with a blueberry topped frisee salad, warm potatoes and bacon, and a sweet pomegranate reduction around the plate. The jumbo-sized scallops are unlike any other seafood dish, plump and cooked to perfection. The pomegranate reduction adds sweetness to the salty meal, a common trick in Abbey dishes. With The Abbey's plentiful wine list that features more than thirty different types, one cannot help but try a glass. To go with the seafood, try the 2009 Paul Hobbs "Crossbarn" Chardonnay from Napa Valley, CA.

For the main meal, the Fish No. 2, currently Orange Marlin with bamboo rice risotto, red curry sauce, and micro basil, is a fish-lovers dream. The chef does a wonderful job of playing with the ingredients and artfully placing them on the plate, making it pleasing for both the taste buds and the eyes. For something more traditional, try the Bacon-Wrapped Pork Tenderloin. Served with sweet corn "succotash" and an apple and arugula salad, the juicy tenderness of the meat paired with the sweet apple salad will have you craving it the very next night.

For a gold-medal finish, any of The Abbey's signature desserts will do. Try the "Sweet + Salty" Chocolate Cake, topped with homemade caramel and chocolate sauces and sea salt, again cooking up a unique blend of tastes for your pleasure. The Home-Made Apple Crumple, one of The Abbey's daily fruit desserts, is topped with a crunchy oatmeal crust and vanilla ice cream. The Red Velvet Cake Sundae, one of the daily sundaes offered at the restaurant, is a personal favorite. The chef freshly bakes homemade Red Velvet cake and blends it with vanilla ice cream. Topped with a cream cheese whipped topping and chocolate sauce, this is not your average sundae. Try the 2010 J. Hofstätter Pinot Nero from Alto Adige, Italy for a dessert wine as pleasant as the featured sweets. Voilà, the perfect meal!

www.theabbeytucson.com.