

## FnB—Old Town Scottsdale Eatery Where Everybody Knows Your Name

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Call it a “restaurant” or an “eatery” if you will, but we think Old Town’s new FnB is more of a delectable little gem with some of the Valley’s best service and butterscotch pudding.



ONCE IN A WHILE, an instance will occur that is so special it keeps you walking on clouds for weeks. Such was the case when we visited Old Town Scottsdale’s newest dining darling, FnB (short for “food and beverage”). The charming eatery is the invention of restaurateur Peter Kasperski, Pavle Milic and chef Charleen Badman, who’ve all led successful lives at other Scottsdale restaurants.

Though it’s hard to upstage Chef Badman’s stellar cooking, Milic steals the show with his unending charisma and kindness. He has a way of making every diner feel as if they’re the only one in the restaurant, remembering all of their names. We were distracted from Milic’s magic for a moment to notice the eye-catching flooring, which consists of red, yellow, green and blue tiles and adds visual excitement to the cozy space. Charm is dished up in the form of framed black-and-white photographs that line the walls and gorgeous pitchers of flowers that decorate the three-sided bar. This counter is the best seat in the house; it allows a front-row view into the exhibition-style kitchen where Chef Badman is at work. Plus, it allows the opportunity to chat with your dining neighbors, as FnB boasts a friendly, sociable atmosphere, in part thanks to Milic’s welcome gift for gab.

The FnB menu features small plates (think olives and roasted nuts) and larger entrees for incredibly reasonable prices. During our visit, the priciest item—the lamb tenderloin—went for \$27. We started with a few veggie-focused dishes: the pickled beets, pistachios and ricotta cream on crostini and the fried green tomatoes with green goddess dressing. The crisp pucker-inducing beets, crunchy nuts and velvety cheese were delicious with the crusty bread while the medley of color was pleasing to the eye. It’s always fun to see a throwback dish on a menu—and it’s even more exciting when the results are as tasty as the fried green tomatoes. We devoured the Willcox-sourced tomatoes, which remained firm and fresh, not floppy and greasy. It’s rare that the deliciousness of a veggie can shine through after being fried, but the tomatoes had our attention. The vegetable dish that didn’t top our list was the grilled spicy broccoli, which was a tad too charred and dry for our liking.

We were over the moon, though, about FnB’s entrees, which covered a short but delectable mix of meat, seafood, poultry and pasta dishes. (Generally, the changing menu features one of each type of dish, plus one or two nightly specials.) The grilled lamb tenderloin was divine and the presentation was lovely, to boot. The dish was rounded out with snap peas, potatoes, artichokes and lamb’s best friend, mint. We were just as smitten with the unique garganelli pasta. (This type of pasta is similar to penne, though it is rolled and ridged.) This warming dish featured Blue Lake green beans, goat cheese and basil. Each portion was sizable, though not gut-busting—just enough to fill you up and share a bite or two with a dining companion.

Things just kept getting better as the desserts rolled in. The blackberry crème brûlée, with a touch of lavender and honey, was among the most delicious incarnations of the traditional dessert we’ve ever dipped a spoon in. Though subtle, the lavender added loads of interest. For the utmost refreshing treat, the sticky Meyer lemon cake was a winner, as it was served with a tangy-sweet lemon-verbena ice cream and strawberries. The most memorable dessert of the bunch was the butterscotch pudding, topped with a cloud of whipped cream and freshly grated nutmeg. Though it doesn’t read like anything special, we couldn’t get enough of this thick and creamy concoction. And we appreciated that it wasn’t overly saccharine, like butterscotch has a reputation for being. It was just right—kind of like FnB itself.



**Local Love:** Apart from using Arizona-based goods throughout its menu, FnB shows devotion to local grapes on its wine list. The list relies heavily on Arizona wines (as well as a few local beers), including selections from Dos Cabezas WineWorks, Page Springs Vineyards & Cellars, Callaghan Vineyards, Pillsbury Wine Company and Arizona Stronghold Vineyards.

### TO LEARN MORE:

#### FNB

7133 E. Stetson Dr., Scottsdale.

480.425.9463, [www.fnbrestaurant.com](http://www.fnbrestaurant.com).

**Chef:** Charleen Badman

**Hours:** Wednesday through Sunday, 5 to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. (late-night menu).