

Something's in the Heir

Written by Story by Melissa Larsen / Photographed by Cassandra Tomei
Wednesday, 22 April 2009 09:28 - Last Updated Wednesday, 22 April 2009 11:51

After closing the doors to his stellar Michael's at the Citadel in 2007, chef Michael DeMaria is back on the eatin' scene with Market Street at DC Ranch's new friendly but fine dining destination, Heirloom.



CHEF MICHAEL DEMARIA has long been a staple on the Valley dining scene. For 10 successful years, he was at the helm of the now-defunct Michael's at the Citadel restaurant. Then, it seemed that DeMaria was in for another homerun with his Trattoria M project at Centerpoint Condominiums in Tempe, though it was eventually stalled. Now, the chef is back in Scottsdale—Market Street at DC Ranch, to be specific—with Heirloom.

After a whirlwind, 33-day construction process, the former space of Flo's Hong Kong Market was transformed into the simple yet elegant Heirloom. The restaurant was undoubtedly a labor of love: chef DeMaria did some of the tiling himself and his father headed up the electrical work. The result is an L-shaped dining room with brick-color walls, beautiful tiling and a glass-enclosed wine cellar and chef's table (where diners have an up-close-and-personal look into the kitchen). Another eye-catching element is the centerpiece located on each dining table—a bouquet of long, skinny breadsticks. These delicious sticks are meant to be dunked in the complimentary, individually portioned hummus that is located at each diner's place setting. The breadsticks are far from overfilling and the hummus offers a slight spicy kick.

Upon looking at the ever-changing menu, it's clear that the bill of fare at Heirloom is arranged unlike most eateries. Instead of appetizers, entrées and desserts, the menu is divided into courses—five of them. The intention is to order one item from two, three or more courses (another reason for the light breadsticks instead of thick, filling loaves). But do keep in mind that each dish is not intended to be shared à la family style, and be prepared with all your menu selections (save dessert) during your initial order as some of the items are a bit time-consuming to prepare.

The first course features a few small salad offerings. The heirloom tomato salad tasted incredibly fresh and the tomatoes were plump and juicy. The white balsamic-tossed baby spinach provided a flavorful—and, again, fresh—accompaniment. We also enjoyed the creamy mozzarella, crowned with roasted peppers and bibb lettuce, on a crunchy grilled crostini. The second course enlisted an incredible short rib cannelloni with caramelized onions, bleu-taleggio fondue and beef broth. The short ribs, which were wrapped by the pasta, were utterly silky.

The next round offered up a few seafood dishes, including the shrimp-wrapped diver scallop with bacon-and-corn chowder. The scallop was tender and tasty, as was the shrimp that sat on top of it. However, with just one scallop and one piece of shrimp, though both sizable, the dish could have used at least one more of each.

As the last savory round, the fourth course had several substantial, hearty dishes, like a prosciutto-wrapped filet of beef. We sampled the chicken and mushroom entrée, and though it sounds simplistic, the truffle sauce made the dish quite refined. The thyme-scented veal cutlet, topped with lump crab and asparagus, as well as the mint-scented lamb chops, were also favorites. The menu additionally features a few carb-centric sides, like pasta and potatoes, if your selections call for a bit more starch.

For dessert, or the fifth course, we hoped to test the much raved-about chocolate pudding with balsamic strawberries. Unfortunately, Heirloom was fresh out of the popular dish during our visit. However, we were more than pleased with the plate of doughnuts (though they were more like beignets rather than traditional doughnuts) and cinnamon ice cream. The soft-centered sweets were served warm with a light coating of sugar. But our favorite topping on this treat? A spoonful of the sinful cinnamon ice cream.

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Hours: Monday through Saturday, 5:30 to 10 p.m.