

Home Again, With Eddie

Written by Written by Melissa Larsen / Photographed by Cassandra Tomei
Sunday, 31 August 2008 17:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 09 June 2009 14:38

Have you been longing for chef Eddie Matney's famous bacon-infused meatloaf and Mo' Rockin' Shrimp since his Biltmore eatery closed in 2005? Well, dry your eyes and head to Matney's new Old Town dining digs.



Food fanatic or not, there aren't many Valley dwellers who haven't at least heard the name Eddie Matney. This local culinary legend made his mark on the Phoenix dining scene with, most notably, Eddie's Grill and Eddie Matney's at Biltmore Fashion Park. More recently, Matney headed up the food sector at Golf Club Scottsdale. Now, this top chef is up to his old tasty tricks with Old Town's new Eddie's House.

The ambience of this smallish eatery stays true to its name: It's homey. One wall illustrates Matney's family tree and another, above the kitchen, lists his three loves—family, fly fishing and, of course, food. (Nearby, a shadow box even displays shiny fishing reels to demonstrate his love of the sport.) Plus, the chairs and booths are cushy, and the wooden tables look well-worn, almost as if they'd been dwelling in Matney's own dining room for years. However, there are touches that remind you that you're in for a fine-dining experience—for instance, white tablecloths and stunning chandeliers that were reclaimed from wine barrels.

While the décor and thoughtful details (in lieu of a black sleeve, the bill arrives in an antique fly catcher) are decidedly cozy, the real comfort lies in Matney's food. The menu, which includes favorites from his former restaurants, lists comfort-food staples that have been kicked up a notch like bacon-infused meatloaf, baked chicken, prosciutto macaroni and cheese, Mediterranean chicken soup and seafood potpie, plus a few unique eats.

To start, the charred calamari (a menu special) is a delightful departure from the usual breaded variety. The chewy critters have a bit of a kick, as did the accompanying heirloom tomato coulis. The lobster bisque is also unlike most we've previously tried. The bisque lacked the thick, silky-smooth texture that we've come to expect from the ubiquitous dish; however, it made up for its creaminess deficiency with large chunks of lobster awaiting us at the bottom of the bowl. The steak salad, which is artfully arranged in a plump tomato and topped with feta cheese, is refreshing and not the least bit heavy, as some steak-centric salads tend to be.

Presentation is quite important at Eddie's House; several menu items were dished out in a smart, sometimes witty way. Case in point: EHC (a.k.a. Eddie's House Chicken). This table favorite is the poster child for clever food presentation. In a fun ode to a certain mass-market fried-chicken franchise, Matney's tender baked chicken is arranged in a ceramic red-and-white bucket that bears the letters "EHC." The dish is rounded out with tortilla-crust scalloped potatoes and corn-asparagus succotash—sans the foam containers that you might find at the aforementioned fast-food joint.

We can't neglect to mention the long-cherished What's In This? Steak. Well, let us tell you: Giving new meaning to the meat-and-potatoes meal, the softball-size mound is actually a grilled six-ounce hormone-free filet, encased in mashed potatoes and parmesan, which creates golden crust. Though we'd never dare to take a calorie count, this must-try steak isn't as greasy or as heavy as you might expect. If you're going for decadence or want to try something truly different, this is your dish.

Though you're bound to be full of home-cooked goodness by the time dessert rolls around, the after-dinner delicacies at Eddie's House are some of the tastiest in town. The euphoric tiramisu is a delicious divergence from the usual dessert found in most Italian eateries, as the typical ladyfingers have been ingeniously replaced with chocolate chip cookies. The pot de crème, topped with roasted macadamia nuts and whipped topping, will also delight chocolate lovers. A fruity favorite is Eddie's Mom's farina cake, topped with seasonal fruits and simple syrup. This finger-licking dessert—like just about everything on the menu—will take you back to the fond days when mom's home-cooked meals graced the dinner table every night.

Home Again, With Eddie

Written by Written by Melissa Larsen / Photographed by Cassandra Tomei
Sunday, 31 August 2008 17:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 09 June 2009 14:38

Eddie's House

7042 E. Indian School Rd., Scottsdale 480.946.1622, www.eddieshouseaz.com.

Chef: Eddie Matney.

Hours: Sunday through Thursday, 4-10 p.m; Friday and Saturday, 4-11 p.m.