

Elle Wine Country Restaurant

Written by Christine Whitton



Locally owned and operated, Elle Restaurant is the first and only wine country concept eatery to open in Tucson for some 10 years. (Yup, you read right.) So, how is it that this culinary masterpiece has been kept hush-hush for so long?

With a menu that changes seasonally—that's three times a year for us Zonies—entrées are mixed, tossed and infused with organically grown, locally produced herbs, fruits and vegetables from Forever Young Farm in Amado, Ariz. The recipes—traditional of French, Italian and Northern California cuisine—result in oh-so yummy appetizers and out-of-this-world dishes.

The story begins back in 1998 with two gentlemen friends; one who wines and dines the guests and one who cooks up the menu's stellar servings. As for the restaurant's name, that evolved from the chef's grandmother, Elle, who just so happened to be an exemplary chef herself. Since then, the restaurant changed hands in 2005 leaving the original chef de cuisine, Tony Cardadeiro, behind now to work under the direction of Jeff Fuld, owner and chef of the "new" Elle.



Located in the Joesler-built Broadway Village at the corner of Broadway Boulevard and North Country Club Road, Elle is in close proximity to the University of Arizona, Tucson Botanical Gardens and the Reid Park Zoo. Guests can enjoy the restaurant's relaxing indoor atmosphere outlined in oak or outdoors on one of its two plush patio settings. Wine connoisseur can revel in the restaurant's ever-expanding 200 selection wine list, sipping any of its 30 varieties offered by the glass.

For dinner, we suggest you bring your appetite because choosing just one plate may be a bit difficult. For starters, nibble on plate of antipasto (hot coppacola, green peppercorn salami, marinated baby artichokes, house-made mozzarella, marinated bell peppers and mushrooms, goat cheese-stuffed peppadew peppers and spiced olives) while sipping on rich red Napa Valley wine. Later, share a salad or petite portion of risotto. The risotto with roasted corn, haricot verts, grape tomatoes, parsley, lemon zest and goat cheese sounds divine. Come dinner, indulge on the Dijon-crusting rack of New Zealand lamb with cumin sauce, mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables. But, don't take our word—try it for yourself. Finish the evening with a warm rustic apple-cranberry tart topped with vanilla bean gelato.



Reservations, anyone? 520.327.0500, www.ellerestaurant.com.