

Sonoma County Restaurants

By Carolyn Horan E-Mail: horan@sonic.net

Alexander's – At Timber Cove Inn

As I thought about Valentine's Day and a romantic setting for dinner, I pictured the waves of the Pacific Ocean crashing along the Sonoma County coast line. There are several outstanding dining experiences available along the coast, but we often think of them being too far and inaccessible. A bit of research on the web and I settled on Timber Cove Inn which is actually only about 15 miles north of Jenner. I think nothing of driving 45 miles to lunch in central Marin. Alexander's Restaurant is less than 30 miles from my home in Forestville. In researching the Timber Cove Inn I found reasonable winter room rates so deciding to treat myself on this assignment. A friend joined me and we spent Saturday night and enjoyed both dinner and breakfast Sunday morning at Alexander's.



Alexander's is an intimate dining room with a view of the ocean and a central fireplace. The staff is both professional and friendly and you feel very welcome there. Chef Jon Mortimer trained at the Horst Mager Culinary Academy and then studied as an apprentice in Geilo, Norway and Fiesole, Italy before he became a corporate chef in the United States. He opened two restaurants in Idaho featuring a French/ Latin fusion in his culinary style. In the fall of 2008 he began the new restaurant at Timber Cove where he has established a signature cuisine incorporating products of the area's ranchers, fisherman, farms and winemakers. Riley Huddleston (see picture) is the

Executive Sous Chef who was trained at the New England Culinary Institute and worked at quality restaurants in Manhattan and Seattle before going to Boise where he opened his own restaurant, the Boise Fry Company, which he still operates.

Both men contribute to creating a menu that addresses their motto, "Where Earth Meets Ocean." For my dinner I selected the Butternut Squash Soup with crisp leeks and crème fraiche (\$ 7) and the Sonoma Lamb Shank: cabernet braised, sun dried tomato, Yukon Gold potato, root vegetables and tomato jam (\$26). Also on the 'earth' side of the menu was Creek Stone Ranch New York Steak with steamed asparagus, au gratin potatoes and cabernet demi glace (\$28) a Pork Loin dish (\$24) and Wild Mushroom Fettuccine with Chanterelles, black

Trumpet, porcini Crème fraiche, shallot, root vegetable, and squashes (\$19). The Ocean side featured fish soups and salads (\$12 to \$15), Swordfish, Cioppino, Salmon Roulade or Corvina Sea Bass ranging from (\$25 to \$27).

The breakfast menu Sunday morning included five house specialties, four options from the griddle, four egg and omelet selections

and fresh fruit/yogurt/cereal choices. I chose the Eggs Benedict (\$12.50). The service was good and the food (and the coffee) was fresh and hot. I like that. The lunch menu along with soup and salads, features five sandwiches or burgers ranging from \$9 to \$15, and three pastas ranging from \$12 to \$14, plus Dungeness Crab Cakes for \$15.

Chef Mortimer is a wine connoisseur and pairing wine with food is an important aspect of his culinary art. The wine list is quite extensive and more that I can cover in this article. Chef Huddleston has a special interest in spices. He is introducing into his dishes



new spices that he is getting from his father who is currently working in the Middle East. He feels spices, like a good wine, should be well balanced.

Alexander's features monthly Wine Maker Dinners, Jazz and Martini Nights, Musicians for Holiday Events, Concert Series for Summer on the Outdoor Stage, Locals Night the first Friday of each month featuring a musician and special meal, and is planning joint ventures with Gualala Art Center. To learn more about the ongoing events you can go to www.timbercoveinn.com

I had a wonderful pre-Valentine treat. My friend Barbara Lavaroni and I entertained two friends, the Lamberts from Sea Ranch, who joined us for a glass of wine Saturday afternoon. We played a game of 'Rummikub' and had a nice drink from the bar in the spacious lounge of the lodge before dinner. We shared a charming rustic room with two comfortable queen beds and a fireplace. Our meals were delicious with generous portions and a great presentation. The tab for all of this cost us each \$183.84. Of course, we could have just driven up for dinner (or breakfast) and not stayed in the Inn, but once in a while you should do something special for yourself. You deserve it.

Timber Cove Inn is located at 21780 North Coast Hwy 1 in Timber Cove, CA. The phone is 707 847 3231.

