

Restaurant Review 23 The Brick Top's January 1, 2015

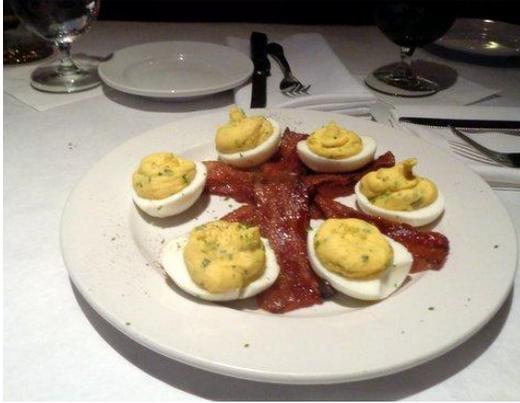
RESTAURANT REVIEW: The Brick Top's: Don't let a Frontenac address scare you away. I placed the Brick Top's in the same category as Annie Gunn's great food, great service and affordable if you go there for lunch. Just because it is at Plaza Frontenac and sits in front of Sak's Fifth Avenue is not a reason to think it is a credit card buster.

We had a table of four for lunch on New Year's Day. It was the first visit for everyone at the table. Everyone was happy about our choice and the one complaint was very minor when compared with the overall service, presentation and taste.



You don't see "deviled eggs" on a restaurant menu for appetizers plus "Millionaire Bacon." This was a must try at \$10. The deviled eggs were good. The filling was large, fresh and unlike most Deviled eggs, covered most of the egg. However the chef admitted they were lacking zest as a bottle of hot sauce arrived with the order. The suggestion from one of our diners who makes pretty good deviled eggs was to add some pickle relish. Of course she also uses Durkee's Famous Sauce with her recipe.

But what made the dish a huge hit was the "Millionaire Bacon," which was fried perfectly with a sweet taste thanks to a coating of sugar. It was so good I inquired if a BLT with "Millionaire Bacon" was on the Summer menu. I was told it wasn't. That's too bad.



My wife ordered the French Onion Soup (\$8) and a Palm Beach Salad (\$18). She reported that the French Onion Soup was as good as any she has ever had. While the Palm Beach Salad didn't look like much of a bargain for \$18 but once it was spread out on the bowl it was more than enough for one sitting and about 40-percent of the order was sent home. The salad consisted of lump crabmeat, poached shrimp remoulade, avocado, tomato and chopped egg. High marks were given for the salad.



Another diner ordered the Cobb Salad (\$16) with grilled chicken breast, tomato, avocado, chopped egg, blue cheese and bacon. Again once spread out in the bowl it was a huge amount of food and a portion went home with the diner hoping her son home from college, would not find it in the refrigerator before she had a chance to finish it.



Our third diner made an interesting choice. The day before he had stopped at an inexpensive Mexican restaurant in far South County and ordered fish tacos which he thought were good and they were cheap, consisting of of fried cod wrapped up with some lettuce. Using this as a measure he ordered the Fish Tacos (\$15) which came with a side. He picked the garden salad for his side.

The blackened fish of the day was grilled perfectly and despite two fish costing four times as much as his meal the day before, he felt he got his money's worth.



For my order I asked our waitress for some consulting and if I should buy the filet medallions (\$18) or the chicken tenders' platter with two sides (\$14.00). She thought and finally said while the filet medallions are very good there is not much on the plate plus sides are al a carte. She said the chicken tenders are a favorite and come with two sides. I was allowed to substitute the cole slaw and French fries with other sides. I picked the twice baked potato and roast green beans.



I was fortunate that I did not eat breakfast. Two of the chicken tenders went home with some of my wife's Palm Beach Salad. The tenders were hand breaded and perfect. I did add some pepper to my twice baked spud...while the roasted green beans were a nice surprise on a cold January day.

Everything was perfect and we all vowed to come back. Then the one sour note occurred. While I paid with a credit card, the other couple paid with cash. Our waitress seeing that it was cash asked, "Do you need any change?"

You never ask that as a server. You always say, "I'll be right back with your change" and let the customer tell you if you can keep it. You never want to put the customer in the position of feeling like a cheapskate. In this case change was needed as he only had larger bills and not to bring change would be ripping off the customer.