

Notable

Kathy Richardier, Calgary Herald

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NOtable (that's how the restaurant renders its name) has been around long enough for you all to have heard the jokes about "no table" and "not able." Well, there is not now, nor has there ever been, anything notable about chef and owner Michael Noble. It is true, however, that when you phone for a reservation you may discover there are no tables available. That's what happened to us. But that's only because Notable (that's how my editor renders the name) allows only half its tables to be reserved, leaving the other half for walk-in diners. Chef Noble encourages people to come in and enjoy a good meal without having to think about it far in advance.

On Grey Cup Sunday we were looking for a good meal and we knew Noble would deliver, so we perched ourselves at one of the high lounge tables that was just perfect for a panoramic view of the busy kitchen, bar and rotisserie. The view helped whet our appetites mightily. In the dining room, we could see that even the Grey Cup hadn't kept diners away. We've visited Notable a couple of times and it's always busy. Busy is good.

Notable's Sunday dinner rotisserie offering was Spragg Farm porchetta--cracklins and all--and we could see the pork roast doing its rounds over the rotisserie flames. That was Sunday dinner for The Man. We watched many orders of Saltspring Island mussels and "frites" go by. "Mmmm, mussels," I sighed. That was my Sunday dinner. We have, in the past, had the rotisserie-vegetable flatbread pizza, garnished with fresh arugula; the monthly burger inspiration, at the time a perfectly pink beef burger with the girth a good burger should have; chicken confit ravioli; and more. All of it was good, as expected from one of the city's finest chefs and his kitchen crew.

But before we launched into Sunday dinner, we had Sunday appetizers. Seared, plump Fanny Bay scallops were served with romaine hearts lightly grilled on the rotisserie and topped with a caper-and-bacon dressing and a grating of cheese (\$20; \$32 for dinner size). This is perfection on a plate. We needed more salad with this protein-centric dinner, so we ordered a generosity of greens topped with cherry tomatoes and the tart jolt of house-pickled red onions (\$9). It made The Man smile. "A good salad makes you feel kindly toward vegetarians," he said.

About the porchetta (\$26 and definitely not for vegetarians): oh my God. A Flintstone-size slice of tender, flavoursome roast with crisp, crunchy skin, this is died-and-gone-to-heaven food. Sometimes you have to eat skin--it's not about health, it's about flavour. Sides of rapini, carrot and parsnip, with bacon and fennel spatzle noodles make this the Sunday roast you wish mom would have made.

Succulent mussels in a chorizo-spiked broth, slurp, slurp. Dip the frites into ketchup or a silky aioli. Can't go wrong with this one--a share-able appetizer or a meal for one (\$16).

Despite not having a millilitre of space left after this feast, we shared an apple-and-almond galette with vanilla ice cream (\$9). It's a job, after all. The Man concluded aptly: "Give a man a fork and knife and he can dine for a day. Give him directions to Notable and he can dine for a lifetime." Amen to that.

4611 Bowness Rd. N.W., 403-288-4372, notabletherestaurant.ca.

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Ring it in, Then Recover

You can bid 2010 goodbye or say hello to

2011 at Notable. The New Year's Eve seatings (\$20 cover charge) begin at 5 p.m. If you need a good meal the next morning, be aware that

the New Year's Day brunch begins at 9 a.m.