

# Lori's Picks



## The Mouzon House

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As the colder weather once more begins to fall upon the Saratoga region, I find myself wondering where to go to escape the chilly winter breezes that threaten to make my frost-tipped nose a permanent feature on my face. At first glance the Mouzon House appears to be a two-story house transported from 1950's Brooklyn to the downtown hustle and bustle of Saratoga Springs. But follow the decadent smells of "farm to table cooking," and you will find yourself wandering past the covered porch and candle lit windows right into the delightful interior of One Caroline Street's sister restaurant.

My night at the Mouzon House began with a glass of the "house" sauvignon blanc. This classic white wine with a hint of fall's crispness was the perfect accrument to a delightful wooden bar. The arrival of my companions inspired a migration from bar to dining room, where oil on canvas paintings adorn the walls.

The welcoming feeling that I had first felt upon walking through the Mouzon House's front doors continued into the first course. As a "meat-reducer" I am constantly finding ways to make vegetables more interesting; that being said, Chef Dave Pedinotti's seasonal salad was a palatable solution! A plate heaped with mixed greens, topped with fried fennel, grilled peppers, Brussel sprouts, artichoke hearts, and a dabbling of goat cheese excited my palate and simultaneously left

it begging for more. Next up were the crawfish bignettes. With a melt-in-your-mouth appeal, these bite-sized treats were just that: a treat to look at, cut open, and enjoy for every succulent second that they grace your taste buds! Appetizers finished with the apple Caesar salad. Finally, a Caesar salad that doesn't need grilled chicken to be great. Crisp bits of apple, thinly grated cheese, romaine lettuce, and a light, yet perfectly seasoned dressing ... what more could a fall salad call for?

With a decidedly organic flair, we were served our main courses. First out was the pasta special, complete with shrimp, lobster, crawfish, and linguine. (Not to name any names, but my male companion may have asked for extra bread to literally wipe his plate clean!) Next came the duck special—a duck breast, Italian inspired sausage, and Brussel sprouts. (My female counterpart managed to eat every savory morsel on her plate, save the final bite, which a certain human vacuum cleaner gladly gobbled up!) Finally came a Napoleon. Now I know what you're thinking: dessert for dinner? In fact, the Napoleon consists of various layers of crispy fried pasta, with local cheeses, mushrooms, fennel, peppers, and the freshest tomato sauce to have ever graced a downtown Saratoga restaurant.

Filled almost to capacity, my companions and



I decided to sample only one of the Mouzon House's numerous desserts. Banana bignettes were on the menu, and so fried banana we tried. Shaped into two-bite sized oblong balls, Dave Pedinotti managed to create an excellent blend of the banana's natural sweetness with the goodness that comes from eating something fried. The result was once again a quickly emptied plate!

And so, with my nose finally thawed, my stomach happily stuffed with a wide-range of Creole inspired, local and organically grown food, I hugged my companions good-bye, adorned my winter scarf, and bid the Mouzon House farewell for the evening. As I write this, the winds are once more beginning to howl as winter is rushing fall out with a sprinkling of snow. With my stomach already grumbling at the memory of last night's meal, I have a sneaking suspicion that my dinner tonight will be made, once again, by the naturally talented Dave Pedinotti, the chef and owner of the Mouzon House: a place where I will gladly go to enjoy good company, fine wine, and satiable cuisine!

~L. Parker~