

TRIO A Brick Oven Cafe

By Tim Whims

It was the last Friday that my wife and I had a babysitter before my restaurant-review deadline, and I had just entertained a last-minute review balk from another downtown Greenville eating establishment. "We don't need any advertising," said the frustrated-sounding manager on the other end. "But, but, but..." I tried to explain that he didn't have to pay to have his restaurant reviewed. No dice. And now I'm stumped. Oh, and we are really hungry. Maybe I should have explained the babysitter thing.

Remembering a very recent conversation with Kip Wynne, one of two owners, regarding a TRIO review for the December issue, I called. "Say no more," he said. "C'mon in." His answer is the reason I'm telling you this story instead of writing about food (at least for right now). That simple conversation exactly describes the tranquil and friendly atmosphere of this 9-year-old establishment.

The first thing you notice is the handcrafted gas lanterns lining the exposed brick walls and the big front windows looking with a view of downtown and their outside seating. The second is that your nose is full of that wonderful wood-fired brick oven smell.

Kip suggested we try the wings. Wings? In an Italian place? Okay. They also have several other standard antipasti, but I now understand why he made the suggestion. They're baked in the wood oven, delicious and spicy spicy. I think he knew we were going to order pasta and wanted to make sure we would get a taste of their oven, the oven in which they make their thin-crust gourmet pizzas. I've had the pizza before and it, like everything I tried that evening, was a tasty experience.

The TRIO house salad, a combination of mixed greens covered with grapes, pecans, and crumbed blue cheese topped with house vinaigrette, came before our entrees. We decided to pick one thing off the menu, Spicy Shrimp and Scallop Fusilli, and one of the daily specials, baked Mahi with a vegetable casserole and garlic redskin mashed potatoes served with a side of Caribbean jalapeno cream sauce. Both were fantastic. The cream sauce wonderfully complemented the Mahi and the casserole was tremendous. Those who like it with a kick, try the fusilli. If you don't like kick, don't even think about it.

TRIO has a relaxed feel with an upscale and professional staff. The food is made fresh daily, including the pasta. The wine selection is great, the draft beer is regional and all menu items can all be prepared to your specifications. Anyone will be comfortable, and very full, whether you want a laidback evening or entertaining. One last thing; don't forget homemade deserts. We had chocolate something with chocolate and chocolate in a chocolate chocolate something crust served with chocolate. Unbelievable.

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