

From Farm & Coast to Fine Dining Experience

By RICHARD and AMANDA PAYATT
Special to CASA

SOMETHING IS NEW AT THE CANARY HOTEL'S COAST RESTAURANT. Chef Brian Parks has put up a dynamic and ever-changing new menu focused on local, sustainable, and seasonable food, and the new restaurant manager, Gary Lynd, formerly owner of State and A, has brought in a new look and feel. It is a one-two punch that is going to be hard to beat.

Coast has enhanced ambiance with this remodel to create a much quieter, more serene dining experience. While the bar at Coast is as lively as ever, the new dining room feels private and calm so that the food can get the focus it deserves. Chef Parks has upped his game for the new approach, which is now all about local fish, local farms, and local wines. It is a menu that changes from day to day, and week to week. Such changes are hardly unusual in Santa Barbara, but here it is a daily credo.

Parks is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy, in San Francisco. After a stint with Michael Cimarusti at the Water Grill in Los Angeles, the Ojai Valley Inn and Spa, and three years at Coast, it was time to show his skills.

His first decision seems to have been to go local- all the way. It is not enough that Parks can go to the Farmer's Market on State Street. Most chefs in town can do that. But he can do it with a cart from Coast's kitchen, walk to the market, and have it back ready for prep well before the guests arrive. Delights from BD Farms, Regier Farms, Shepards Farms, and Tutti Frutti Farms fill the fruit and vegetable bins. Baby abalone from Cultured Abalone in Goleta, and oysters from up and down the West Coast glisten on ice in the foyer and entice a glance at the appetizer menu. When the abalone

gets roasted up, reach for a martini.

Parks knows fish, and most especially local fish. The main courses range from the local rockfish, to line caught salmon, to sablefish (black cod) to kampachi from Hawaii. Parks handles these with the skills that he honed at Water Grill. The sablefish is crisp on the edges, and silky all the way through. Punched up against a succotash of corn and fava beans, it shines nicely. The grilled rib eye steaks and the house-made lamb ravioli are also very well handled.

The wine selection has plenty of European and Australian wines, but its focus is also on the local. The evening that we dined, Fred Brander's wines received two pages of description and suggested pairings.



Gary Lynd, Manager



Chef Brian Parks, Executive Chef, Coast Restaurant & Bar. "The local vendors I work with find a way to have consistent, high quality products that you can't find in many other areas of the country. They have a real passion for what they do, and enjoy sharing that passion with other people. They're great resources for me to work with and rely on as a Chef."

The desserts are simple, and designed to show off the seasonal freshness of the fruit. The peach tart had a lovely crunch and a glaze that did not overpower the freshness of the fruit. Also, the berry martini, a pile of fresh berries in a martini glass, was a hit with us. There is no telling what the menu will be this week. But we are looking forward to finding out what it might be.

A sampling from the new menu: **Roasted Baby Abalone (The Cultured Abalone)** with Ogo-Cucumber Mignonette, and **Kampachi Crudo** with a Cerignola Olive and Radish Salad for starters. Entrees not to miss include **Roasted Black Cod** with Corn and Fava Bean (Tutti Frutti Farms) Succotash, Baby Heirloom Tomatoes and Bloomsdale Spinach, **Line Caught Salmon** with an

English Pea Ragout, **Roasted Trout** with Herbs de Provence (**Sheppard Farms**), Spring Onions and Tomato Butter, and a **Grilled Ribeye** with Verdalaga and Heirloom Tomatoes and Truffle Tater Tots, and a **Housemade Lamb Ravioli** with Pea Tendrils, Morels and Onion Jus. Satisfy your sweet tooth with seasonal desserts like a **Cherry Pie** with Housemade Vanilla Chamomile Ice Cream, **Summer Peach Tart (Reiger Farms)** with Spiced Pepitas, Caramel and Fleur de Sel, and **Spiced Walnut Carrot Cake** with a Housemade Vanilla-Yogurt Sorbet, or **Potted Panna Cotta** with Strawberries (**Sheppard Farms**) and Angel Food Cake.



The Green Bean salad, which we had as the starter, was a charming mix of subtle fresh flavors, blended by the garlicky vinaigrette, and finished with crunchy fennel.



EAT. DRINK. LOCAL.

Coast Restaurant & Bar is open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Coast is located at 31 West Carrillo Street in Santa Barbara. The restaurant is open daily from 7am -10pm. The bar will remain open until 11pm on weekdays and 12 midnight on Fridays and Saturdays. To make a reservation, call 805-879-9100 or visit www.canarysantabarbara.com.



884-0300. For more information on Canary Hotel, please visit www.canarysantabarbara.com

Canary Hotel is a member of the Leading Hotels and is located at 31 West Carrillo Street in Santa Barbara. To make a reservation, call toll-free 1-877-468-3515 or (805)



Amanda and Richard Payatt combine their considerable writing skills with their incredible knowledge and experience of fine dining to bring you this column.