

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

Restaurant D'Theeboom
Amsterdam

Décorated in black and tan, with dining room chairs in a warm cherrywood color, **Restaurant D'Theeboom** has an intimate feel. Afro-Cuban music plays in the background, but Chef George Thubert's cuisine is decidedly French in inspiration. Owner and chef for 16 years, Mr. Thubert is comfortably working in his own milieu; visiting **Cognoscenti Magazine** editors found each dish clearly marked with his identity.

An *amuse-bouche* of hickory-smoked salmon cooked *à la minute* in basil sauce kicked things off in proper style. A salad of fresh, crisp green beans came with a zesty truffle dressing and hazelnuts. Scallops with spring onions were served with a rich and fragrant bouillabaisse sauce and Espelette pepper. Oven-roasted monkfish was enhanced by a subtle curry sauce, while pink grapefruit added a nice tart bite. Dishes like the impeccably fresh carpaccio of tuna and sword fish with cider vinegar and tarragon, or veal brochette of with citrus butter and lemon grass, revealed the chef's flair for achieving the right taste balance through judicious use of vinegars and fresh citruses—once again proving that traditional mainstays of northern French cuisine (butter, eggs, and cream) aren't necessary to achieve richness and depth on the table.

All the meats and fish we sampled were perfectly cooked—a consistency that is surprisingly rare even at higher levels of dining excellence. Each dish was also accompanied by plenty of healthy vegetables, imaginatively employed while avoiding even a hint of banality or repetitiousness.

At D'Theeboom, French wines are served to match the cooking. We had a 1998 Côte Rôtie "Cordeloux"; densely colored, it showed red fruit, smoke and herbs and bark in the palate along with very soft tannins and a lingering finish—a supple wine if a touch

unfocussed, quite rustic in character yet very charming. Alternately sipping and munching, we were struck by how well Chef Thubert's sauces—including the seafood sauces—worked with red wine.

The dessert menu was one of the more complete—and appealing—that we encountered during our culinary tour of Holland. Although the crème brûlée was overly milky, other standouts included a fennel mousse with tomato confit and vanilla sauce and white peach bavarois with caramel sauce and rum. And we loved the terrine-like fresh red fruits in Banyuls jelly with lime sorbet!

D'Theeboom comes warmly recommended.

This article was written by contributing editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

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Left, terrine of red fruits in Banyuls jelly. Above, Chef Thubert.

D'Theeboom

210 Singel
Amsterdam

Ph: 31 (0)20-623-8420

Email: theeboom@xs4all.nl