

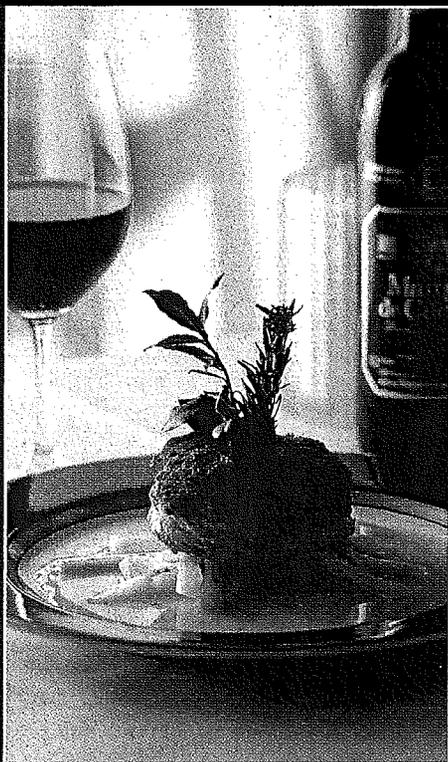
Restaurant Review



by A. Richard Langley

As frequent diners, we have particular culinary tastes; yet as long as the food quality and menus remain consistent, we tolerate the constant fluctuation of restaurants' staffs and ownership. One popular Buckhead eatery, however, has successfully defied menu continuity.

Established in 1991 by the uniquely named Paul Luna (who now helms Eclipse di Luna), Luna Si changes 80% of its menu monthly. Luna Si's culinary team, now headed by chef/owner Albert Lunalover (Paul's older brother) and managing part-



ner Jim Montgomery, ensure that such staple items as the pan-charred Chilean sea bass with creamy arugula and fennel (\$18) are permanent fixtures. So, craving some midweek dining fun and curious to see if Luna Si lived up to its slogan—"A Constantly Evolving Culinary Adventure"—a friend and I recently ventured there.

Luna Si's ambience and menu are playful, energetic, and casually funky, which is commensurate with its Peachtree Road (Brookwood Village) environs. At the end of the short, tapestry-lined entrance, we were greeted by the artsy-looking host/server who led us through a cluster of well-spaced tables to a rear location. Black-clad trendites, business types, and relaxed regulars were nestled in cozy havens created by the hanging tapestry of varied colors and designs.

We reveled in our lively surroundings. It is a bit loud, as conversations and the anonymous instrumental music clash. A small, intimate bar located near the kitchen affords one access to the enticing aromas. Paintings, artwork, and artifacts (by local artists) of diverse international influences adorn the white walls-and ceiling. The most memorable overhead treats: a black-and-white sketch of Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny of *The X-Files*, and a sprawling, centrally located painting of the world.

The food was also unique. We ordered appetizers. The open-faced eggroll (\$6), a crispy, tostado-like creation, featured light, flavorful portions of salmon, cabbage, and soy sauce. And although there was enough to satisfy two, it was difficult to cut and divide. Next was a wedge of rich and lightly filling fresh country ricotta cheese encircled by mixed olives and individual slices

(nice touch!) of ciabatta bread (\$3). For the main course, I opted for the Seared Atlantic salmon with a ginger crust and cucumber citrus coulis (\$17). The healthy portion of salmon was light on decorative garnishments, all the better to savor the lightly seasoned and delicately textured treat. While the ravioli of the day and the rigatoni pasta, with broccoli, goat cheese stock, and crushed red pepper had piqued his interest, my friend chose that day's generous serving of risotto (\$14): baked chicken, spinach, and mozzarella. Good risotto is hard to find, and judging by his satiated look, this creation made the cut. He said it was a tad spicy; however, I found that the mild spiciness didn't affect the tasty cohesion of the ingredients. Other items include pan-charred mixed meat (\$21), an assortment of New York strip, pork loin, and lamb chops over potato soufflé with green beans and a mustard/merlot sauce; and spaghetti squash with pear and blue cheese crumble (\$6).

My friend passed on dessert. I didn't. Everything, from flan to vanilla crème brûlée (\$4.50) to Italian dolce finale (\$7, homemade biscotti with your choice of port wine, late harvest wine, cappuccino, or espresso), sounded good. An ice cream lover, I went with the gelatto of the day (\$4.50): cookies and cream. The four petite, rich scoops, which were lightly layered with real whipped cream, were the perfect capper.

Luna Si definitely has a flair for melding diverse looks and fare into an enjoyable and unique dining experience. Whether you're a conservative or an adventurous diner, you should allow yourself the pleasure of checking it out. **N**

*Brookwood Village, 1931 Peachtree Road
Phone: 404-355-5993*

*Hours: Monday through Thursday, 5:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Friday and Saturday, 5:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.*

*Web site: www.menusAtlanta.com
Reservations accepted*

