

Azur

Not all fine dining in Lexington is located downtown. Just a short ride from the city's center you will find some excellent fine dining establishments, such as Azur Restaurant & Patio (Beaumont Centre, 3070 Lakecrest Circle, Suite 550, Lexington, Kentucky) which offers excellent service with European ambiance.

Inside Azur the feel and look is much different than the small shopping center it's located in, with bold blues and greens accenting curved walls and a bar that curves from the inside to the outside patio (through French doors) which is decorated with color-changing globes. Established in 2004, its Executive Chef is Jeremy Ashby, who, along with Chef Miguel Rivas, has created menus and specials that simply wow their patrons.


Gail and I began with a shared appetizer, Tempura Asparagus (\$9.95), asparagus spears deep-fried, covered with crab and a

cream ragoût over a bed of mixed greens, wonderful to behold in its presentation, but even more wonderful to eat and enjoy. We decided to split separate salads with Gail choosing the Portabella Napoleon (\$10.95), a grilled portabella mushroom stacked with smashed avocado, sliced tomato, shaved red onion, goat cheese and topped with a tomato marmalade. I had the Spinach Salad (\$8.95) that was put together with baby spinach leaves with cranberries, almonds, shaved red onion, topped with duck confit and sun-dried cherry vinaigrette. After one bite of her salad, Gail refused to share any more of this outstanding dish with me.

We chose different entrees, this time agreeing to split the dishes. Gail ordered Hawaiian Hapaku'Paku'u (\$29.95), pan-roasted Hawaiian red grouper (flown in that day from Honolulu) served with ricotta whipped potatoes, sauteed baby sunburst squash, baby bok choy and snowpeas, covered with an interesting kiwi strawberry compote. I had Sea Scallops (\$26.95), pan-seared over goat cheese and a giant green relleno

pepper stuffed with polenta, topped with a roasted garlic, shrimp and honey sauce and a delightful and innovative tomato mango relish that alone would be enough to bring you back to the restaurant a second time. We both chose the 2006 California Conundrum (\$10.95/glass; \$42/bottle), whose pear nectar taste complimented both the salads and the entrees.

The Executive Chef Jeremy received his culinary degree from Johnson & Wales University in Charleston, South Carolina and his business degree from the University of Kentucky; perhaps one of the youngest chefs in Kentucky, his innovation will keep Azur on the map for years. Our total tab was \$160.55 with tip for Amanda, a veteran server who knows her food and knows how to deliver great service.

You can schedule a reservation by calling 859-296-1007 or learn about special dinners and upcoming events at www.azurrestaurant.com and twitter.com/AZUR. 



AZUR boasts a great modern atmosphere