

Nine Elm Makes Danvers a Dining Destination

Posted: September 9th, 2009 | **Author:** KN | **Filed under:** American, Bistro, Danvers | **Tags:** Danvers Restaurants, Dinner, Nine Elm American Bistro, Romantic



The dining scene in Danvers Square has seen quite a revitalization over the past year, and the leader of the pack is Nine Elm American Bistro, which has garnered a loyal following since Matt and Jean Sanidas opened the doors last September.

We decided to see what all the buzz was about and headed there for dinner recently. The cozy dining room was inviting, with warm lighting, wooden tables, chalkboard specials, and the smell of garlic wafting from the kitchen. An adorable bar lines one wall, though only beer and wine are served. (Danvers only accommodates nine full liquor licenses, so new restaurants are often granted a partial one.)

Our server was friendly, attentive, and quite happy to let us linger over the menu. After ordering a bottle of wine, we settled on the Prince Edward Island mussels, sautéed with parsley, lemon, garlic, and white wine (\$8) and the summer vegetable tart baked with goat cheese and ricotta (\$8) to start.

The tart was unexpected; instead of the sautéed veggies we imagined, it was a pastry shell with a cheesy, almost quiche-like filling. While tasty, it lacked a certain oomph. The mussels, however, were a memorable standout— lush and delicious. The shellfish was fresh and the jus perfect; it deserved to have every drop sopped up with the wonderful grilled bread that accompanied the dish.

For entrees, we chose the pan seared sea scallops with spinach-basil risotto and sweet corn butter sauce (\$24) and grilled filet mignon with yukon gold mashed potatoes, blue cheese butter, and a red wine reduction (\$26).

Once again, the seafood was fresh and cooked perfectly. The scallops were expertly seared, and the risotto had a wonderful light pesto flavor that tasted of summer. The steak was marvelous with a slightly smoky grilled exterior and melt-in-your mouth interior. Matt Sanidas' secret to making red wine reduction is mystery, but with a taste like that, I bet the recipe is kept under lock and key.

We didn't really need dessert, but we were having such a lovely leisurely meal that we decided to prolong it by ordering the flourless chocolate torte with vanilla bean ice cream (\$6) The torte was rich and dense and quite good, though we regretted not ordering the profiteroles when we saw a delectable trio of them served to an adjacent table. Oh well, next time.

And where Nine Elm is concerned, there definitely will be a next time. Some may find the idea of an upscale bistro in Danvers Square a bit surprising, but with meals like these, it's certainly worth investigating.

Nine Elm American Bistro
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