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Metro Lafayette

By Susie Iventosch



Chef Jason Low in the kitchen at Metro Lafayette Photo Susie Iventosch

The other day I had the good fortune to dine at Metro Lafayette for lunch with my daughter and a good friend of ours. Even though it was rather hot outside, we enjoyed dining out on the patio under the umbrella. Our waiter was perfectly pleasant and accommodating and the food was exceptional. My daughter and I both ordered the panzanella salad, which may seem a bit odd, since we ran the same salad in the last issue of Lamorinda Weekly, but the dish came so highly recommended by our waiter we just couldn't resist. And am I ever glad ... it was marvelous, made with beautiful heirloom tomatoes, homemade croutons and fresh mozzarella.

Metro has an interesting menu that changes every day, so you can be surprised each time you arrive. And the owners have chosen to work with two co-chefs, so there is never a lapse when one chef is on vacation.

The restaurant is owned by Jack Moore and his wife, Erika Pringsheim-Moore. According to Erika, Jack has been in the restaurant business for 30 years, so he's the expert in the family! The Moores opened Metro Lafayette in June of last year, and have really enjoyed the experience so far.

"We are very excited about the high quality of food that our chefs Jason and Paul are offering, using local ingredients like Moraga heirloom tomatoes, Brentwood corn and peaches and Petaluma poultry," Jack said. "This is the perfect time of year to enjoy the fall harvest in our garden patio, where we grow some of the herbs used in our dishes."

The day we dined at Metro, Chef Jason Low was on duty and he willingly offered to share a recipe with us. "Our Brentwood organic golden corn soup with lemon parsley pesto is a dish that readers can easily replicate at home," Jason noted.

We tried this at home and it's quite easy to prepare and delicious with the lemon and parsley. The lemon presents a unique flavor, different from any other corn soup I've ever tasted.

There were many other dishes that made my mouth water, not the least of which was the chocolate peanut butter cake with peanut butter frosting and candied peanuts. The cake is made with

Valhrona chocolate and the candied peanuts are really a homemade peanut brittle, crushed into pieces. From the looks of the intriguing menu, these two young chefs are having a lot of fun in the kitchen. My friend ordered the Niçoise salad made with wild tuna confit, and we seriously considered the spicy raw tuna poke. But the trio of sandwiches that called to me included grilled brie and apricot marmalade, crab salad, and croquet monsieur made with dry-cured ham and gruyere Mornay sauce. And these were just on the lunch menu.

Dinner that night featured Dungeness crab cakes with avocado, cucumber and smoked tomato vinaigrette, Liberty Farm duck breast with crispy polenta, watercress and cherry gastrique, Misoyaki black cod with scallion rice cake and tempura mushrooms, and a pan-roasted chicken panzanella salad, to mention just a few.

While he doesn't look a day over 22, Jason Low is already in his second career. He grew up in Walnut Creek and graduated from Northgate High School before heading off to U.C. Davis for a degree in Economics. After working in financial services at Charles Schwab for a few years, he discovered his dream career was to be a chef. So he made a few adjustments and took a couple of cooking courses before diving right into the kitchen.

"You crawl before you can walk, and I did just that when I got into this field," Jason said. "Most of my training has been on the job. This is my second career, so I thought, Jason, you're going to sink or swim." From the outside looking in, it looks like he's floated straight to the top!

His enthusiasm is contagious and, though I haven't met his co-chef Paul, I imagine they bounce ideas off one another all of the time. In fact, I learned that Paul was in financial services in his first career, too! "It's fun when I get so excited about a dish," Jason said. "I think we've hit a winner with our new zeppole ricotta fritters we're about to introduce. They are going to be amazing, served with fruit compote." Zeppole fritters are a fried dough dessert originating in Greece. I plan on stopping by to pop one or two in my mouth as soon as possible!



Brentwood organic golden corn soup with lemon parsley pesto Photo Chef Jason Low

Metro Lafayette's Brentwood Organic Corn Soup (serves 4)

8 ears yellow or white corn
8 tablespoons butter
1 yellow onion, roughly chopped
1-2 teaspoons salt (depending on the sweetness of the corn,
use more or less to taste)
½ cup cream

Lemon-Parsley Pesto

One bunch Italian parsley
Juice of one lemon
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ cup half canola oil
Salt to taste

Lafayette Metro is open for dinner every night, lunch Monday through Friday, and brunch on Saturday and Sunday.

Hours:

Mon-Fri 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Bar open until midnight

Sat and Sun 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. (brunch on Sat and Sun)

Metro Lafayette

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