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No Need to go to Gilroy

By Linda U. Foley



Roya Azdanlou presenting her bar Photos Linda U. Foley

Sweden and eventually in culinary school. One of five siblings, she's the only one who followed in her father's footsteps to become a restaurateur. Roya and husband Hamid owned a restaurant in Sweden which explains some of the unusual dishes on the menu (Pannbiff, a kind of hamburger and Black and White sauce, a combination of Bernaise and wine sauces). The Azdanlous, who also own a restaurant in Emeryville, take pride in preparing everything from scratch and using fresh and seasonal ingredients.

When the generous salad serving came, it was very crisp with separate balsamic dressing. The baguette had good consistency and the butter was room temperature and spreadable, both of which are a plus.

I ordered the skewered salmon, served with Hollandaise sauce alongside salt potatoes with fresh parsley. The fish was very fresh and excellent; tasty and succulent on the inside and a bit crunchy on the outside, and the sauce was definitely made in-house and not cloyingly rich. The potatoes were an unexpected but perfect accompaniment to the salmon which usually tends to be served with mashed potatoes or rice.

For dessert, I was interested in the fried Camembert with ice cream (very different) and cloudberry jam, a berry I've not had since living in Germany. Unfortunately, it would have taken 15 minutes to prepare so I opted for the mousse with raspberries which was blissfully delicious.

The coffee was good but somewhat mild for my palette. I prefer something stronger (French or Espresso Roast); but most people water down the coffee at my house.

Next time, I might try the German dish with pork loin and red cabbage. Definitely a go-to place in Lafayette.

Roya's Garlic Garden

Hours: 4 to 10 p.m., Happy Hour 4 to 6 offering wine or beer with garlic bread and olives for \$5. 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, CA. 925-283-3007.

Grand Opening- jazz music and appetizers-is February 18th.

Following in the footsteps of two flamboyant Italian Restaurants (Pasta Per Tutti and most recently Knoxx) is Roya's Garlic Garden in the heart of Lafayette.

The restaurant opened a month ago and serves lunch and dinner. It is redecorated in tones of earthy green, taupe and burgundy and the tables are set with white crisp cloths and black napkins. The owner and chef Roya Azdanlou-while working in the open kitchen-was graciously accepting the comments of departing patrons.

The luncheon menu changes daily and, except for the New York steak and accompaniments at \$15.99, the selections were listed at \$9.99 including bread/butter, salad, coffee or tea. The house wine is Hogue Vineyards and lists at \$7 a glass and \$26 per bottle. All very reasonable.

While Roya served an Italian wine she'd selected for me for its oaky flavor, Mezzacorona from Vignette delle Dolomiti, we had a chance to talk.

A native of Teheran, she and her family emigrated to England when she was 14, where Roya attended school. At 18, she found herself in



Skewered salmon, Hollandaise sauce, salt potatoes and fresh parsley

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