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## Yvonne's breathes new life into Locke-Ober spot as a modern day supper club

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Posted November 6, 2015 by Cheryl Fenton in Dining Downtown: Restaurant Reviews



Yvonne's the new supper club in Downtown Boston. Photo Credit: Cheryl Fenton

When you're filling the shoes of a Boston icon, you had better be good at it. Lest you get side-eyes and whispers. Apparently someone gave Yvonne's the memo to behave because that's exactly what she does. This modern day supper club, which just opened at the end of September in the former space of the historic downtown Boston restaurant Locke-Ober, has a rich decor and even more decadent food.

With an actual address in one place and another for GPS, you might think the alley you walk down

and the blow dry bar you enter are mistakes. But the woman behind the counter will tell you

otherwise.

Named for Locke-Ober's members-only downstairs club, a heavy door lets you into a 150-year-old interior with seriously high-touch, impossibly chic surroundings. Think Damask walls, velvet club chairs, and tufted couches so cozy you'll forget your posture. Several dimly lit crystal chandeliers are clustered in front of Locke-Ober's original Santo Domingo mahogany bar.

We were thrilled to enter Lolita Cocina co-owner Chris Jamison's reinvention and Executive Chef Juan Pedrosa's world of social dining, so we chose the recommended five or so small plates. There are larger "feasts" like Grilled Viper Chop and Crispy Tuna Fregola, but they take 45 minutes to prepare. We were hungry.

The bar program is eclectic (we admired the etched, punch-filled crystal towers). I ordered a champagne concoction called 1989, because that was a good year, and my companion chose War Paint, a manly bourbon drink that I guess prepared him for a scuffle if one were to break out.

First out were Buttermilk Hush Puppies, small moist globes injected with pimento cheese and topped with squares of candied bacon and scallion crowns. They were salty at first, but that settled down once you bit through the perfectly fried crispy outside.

Another favorite was the White Bean & Sausage Toast – sour dough topped with bean puree, Nduja sausage (a spicy, spreadable pork from Italy), Pecorino, and pickled fennel. The usually dominant sausage spice was perfectly tempered by the creamy subtle bean, but it still had a nice kick at the end. And the vinegar gave it a welcome tang.



Yvonne's Kale & Orzo Salad. Photo Credit: Cheryl Fenton

Then came the night's clear winner – a bowl full of Crispy Tater Cubes (shown above with the toast) drizzled in Dutch snack sauce *joppiesaus*, Gouda, and a beet pickled egg slice. These cubes were so perfectly browned on the outside and soft on the inside, that one false move of your fork and you would have mashed potatoes.

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The Kale and orzo salad was a fresh break, with roasted Brussels sprouts, grilled radicchio, Greek feta, and the perfect amount of Banyuls vinaigrette.

The dish we were most excited about was sadly the most disappointing. The K.F.C. is a stone-fired pita topped with Korean fried chicken, kimchee, and cave-aged gruyere. When we order kimchee, we want kimchee. The flavor should be bold. We were left questioning whether there was any at all. Sigh. Moving on to another dish we loved. The Seared Halloumi was drizzled with orange blossom honey, which was the perfect complement to the smoky and somewhat chewy nature of this traditional Grecian meze favorite. It was placed atop a soft cushion of eggplant purée and layered with pita chips.

The dessert list was strong with choices like housemade Negroni ice cream and popcorn brulee. We went old-school with a Painkiller push pop. Because it's frozen vodka with pineapple and coconut.

Yes, Yvonne had some pretty big shoes to fill. But this girl did just fine.

*Yvonne's is located at 2 Winter Place, but if you're using GPS, the entrance is 50 Temple Street.*



Yvonne's Painkiller Push Pop. Photo Credit: Cheryl Fenton

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