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Kurt eats DC

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Author

Message

Kurt



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 231
Location: Atlanta, GA

Posted: Sun May 29, 2005 5:20 pm Post subject: Lunch, Friday May 27

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Lunch, Friday May 27

Naan and Beyond

The invitation my coworker sent to me was for lunch at Non and Beyond, which seemed like a low threshold to meet. . .

Naan and Beyond, as you might imagine, offers Naan. And more. The more include tandoori wraps, half tandoori chickens, lamb and chicken biryani, and samosa.

I got a vegetable samosa and lamb biryani. We got it to go and ate on Sidley's roof, which was very nice, albeit sunny.

The food was pretty good. It was definitely a notch above the normal quality of downtown business district cafeteria-style fare, though there's no really good way to keep rice warm without drying it out. I compensated by putting lots of spicy chutney on my rice, which helped. The mango chutney was a bit off though. It was basically major greys - if you put major greys in a blender and added some yogurt and sugar. Which is to say, it was a mango smoothie.

When my honeymoon with free meals eventually ends, this is a good cheaper business lunch option, though not good enough to satisfy my concern that I have been unable to locate very high quality indian in the city yet. I suppose I'll try Bombay Club next.

Grade: B+

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Kurt



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 231
Location: Atlanta, GA

Posted: Sun May 29, 2005 5:24 pm Post subject: Dinner, Friday May 27

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Dinner, Friday May 27

California Tortilla

I had the teriyako chicken burrito. It sounded terrible, but it got me the chips I needed to finish the hot sauce testing, and it did promise chinese crunch noodles, which I crave.

It was utterly awful. Just terrible. It is rare I do not finish food. The veggies were gross, the rice was dry, and chicken was dry, the tortilla was stale There were random mexican seasonings interspersed with teriyaki. And there weren't even many chinese noodles. Just terrible. I was determined to finish the hot sauce tasting and be done with this place.

They gave me a frequent eaters card. I tore it up in protect.

Grade: D

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Kurt

Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 231
Location: Atlanta, GA

Posted: Sun May 29, 2005 5:55 pm Post subject: Lunch, Saturday May 28

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Lunch, Saturday May 28

Chinatown Express

Yes, back again. But this time, I had something different: The fresh seafood dumplings.

They are clearly hand-pressed, which is good and bad. The plus is that they have more bite. The downside is that they're not quite thin enough, so by the time the contents cooks, part of the dumpling still has a floury taste to it. The sauce also had one spice I didn't much like. Still, very good, and a good deal of relatively healthy food at \$4.50.

Grade: B+

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Kurt

Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 231
Location: Atlanta, GA

Posted: Sun May 29, 2005 6:02 pm Post subject: Dinner, Saturday May 28

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Dinner, Saturday May 28

Johnny's Halfshell

With special visitors, Robert and Maeimpossibleletospell.

First, since I normally take the subway to DuPont, I had no idea how impossible it is to park there.

Second, Johnny's is pretty good proof that my guidebook, despite having a publication date of 2004, is plainly out of date. It claims the highest priced entree is \$22.

That being said, I generally enjoyed the meal.

Bread = pretty flavorless.

Appetizer: Littlenecks with zucchini and tomato. The little salad in the middle was very good. The littlenecks were just OK. Solid sauce, not terribly meaty, and few and far between. Portion size was a problem for me at this restaurant.

Entree: Half lobster with sauteed shrimp, pea and bacon salad. The lobster was extremely good. The shrimps were mediocre. I don't understand the point of butterflyed shrimp. They take about .3 seconds to cook whole anyway, and when butterflyed they have no bite at all. Again, the salad may have been the best part of the dish, but the peas, while fresh and tasty, could have used a quick saute. Full size peas have a bit of starchiness in the center that require at least minimal cooking, which these did not have.

I liked most of the components of the meal, but it was not what I was expecting. Johnnys is known as a low key place for good seafood. I was hoping for a red and white tablecloth dive like in New England. Instead, it most of my items were good but nto great, and the portioning was kind of small. Still, the lobster alone and the two salads get this a pretty high score.

Grade: A-/B+

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RM

Gay Lion



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 302
Location: Between the couch cushions

Posted: Mon May 30, 2005 10:20 am Post subject: Re: Dinner, Saturday May 28

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Kurt wrote:

Dinner, Saturday May 28

Johnny's Halfshell
Grade: A-/B+

And now it's time for brak, counter-brack. A discussion of topical issues, in a tropical setting.



(These people are not kissing, they have pursed their lips in a fury of disagreement. You were probably confused because their ridiculous helmets form the shape of a heart.)

But first, some housekeeping.

1. I do not understand the "drinking contest with scotch" story. I had previously blamed it on the din of this restaurant, but even in text I fail.
2. It is Michael with an "e". In the Words of the Colbert réport, "It's French, bitch".

The bread was indeed flavorless, and was a well chosen companion for the lack of flavor all over the menu. Case in point: my fried oysters. Even if Kurt's supposition that these were flavorful for Oysters (and after this review all seafood advice is suspect) the sauce and "pickled" (quote marks designed to indicate they were actually just soaked in white vinegar) vegetables were lacking flavor as well.

My entrée was grilled white fish "similar to sea bass." First, no. Or at least not when it was in my mouth. Perhaps while in the sea it displays similar affinity for the Hampsted "goldie" lure, or it prefers similar temperature water, or hell, maybe it once tasted similar before it was wood grilled into oblivion. Which brings me to my second point. Wood grills are hard to build use and maintain. Doubly so in a converted row house without handicap accessible bathrooms. Why on earth would you go through all that effort and expense just to overcook fish? You can overcook seafood in a variety of cheaper ways.

Which brings us to Kurt's Lobster. Now, by way of disclosure I did not eat it. But in my defense, had I ordered it I would not have eaten it. I have never, in my life, seen such a bad looking lobster.

Let's put that in context. I have lived most of my life in Florida where tourists who believe that "seafood" describes a fixed set of items available in four regions. Florida has no lobsters, yet has a huge demand for them. A huge indiscriminate demand. We get the dregs, and there is no public pressure to do anything to help an already sorry situation. Additionally, I have eaten at Red Lobster. Multiple times. I say this not in hopes you will feel sorry for me and let me win at board games, but merely to show I know from awful lobster.

Nothing I know of in a kitchen can do that to food. Kurt's lobster had apparently been the the first test case for the Penguin's dehydrating machine. It makes good sense; embassy row was right there. You'd hate to get all the way up to NYC and find out the gun only works on sea-bugs, or has some other diplomat incompatibility. Anyway, dry. Matthew McConaughy and Penelope Cruz searching for a lost treasure boat (or some such ridiculous thing) level dry. The meat is sticking to the damn shell dry.

(Aren't you from fricking Lobstertown, USA?) Also it was small, which can mean increased flavor, but should mean decreased prices.

The Crab cake was bad. And I actually ate this dish, so I'm doubly right. Treble right, if you just like being fascinated by the fact that Treble is apparently the lawmaker's way of saying triple. (Some day I will find a way to make that Star Trek pun, but it will probably be in chambers and nobody will get it.) Anyway, bad crab cake. Michaele had ranked it below frozen food from the supermarket crab cake. Me, I just know flavorless when I taste it. Also, while I don't think putting filler into a crab cake is ever right, I treble think so when you charge \$30 bucks for 2 and fill half of them with ultra refined corn meal. I's sure Crab Grits can be a good meal, but not at that price and not when someone is expecting crab cakes.

The good news is that it was not the worst meal of the trip (that being reserved for the eggs of indeterminate age) on the other hand, the proprietor replaced those eggs sight unseen with cereal.

I don't know, nor am calibrated to, your bifurcated rating system, so I will just give it 7 shoes.

(Noticing that I was writing something bad, Michaele has asked me to temper this review by saying the company was good and that is what matters.)

- Robert J. Morrison
Stormtrooper in drag

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Kurt



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 231
Location: Atlanta, GA

Posted: Mon May 30, 2005 10:52 am Post subject: Re: Dinner, Saturday May 28

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RM wrote:

The bread was indeed flavorless, and was a well chosen companion for the lack of flavor all over the menu. Case in point: my fried oysters. Even if Kurt's supposition that these were flavorful for Oysters (and after this review all seafood advice is suspect) the sauce and "pickled" (quote marks designed to indicate they were actually just soaked in white vinegar) vegetables were lacking flavor as well.

My entrée was grilled white fish "similar to sea bass." First, no. Or at least not when it was in my mouth. Perhaps while in the sea it displays similar affinity for the Hampsted "goldie" lure, or it prefers similar temperature water, or hell, maybe it once tasted similar before it was wood grilled into oblivion. Which brings me to my second point. Wood grills are hard to build use and maintain. Doubly so in a converted row house without handicap accessible bathrooms. Why on earth would you go through all that effort and expense just to overcook fish? You can overcook seafood in a variety of cheaper ways.

Let's start here, because all of the above follows a similar theme: YOU ORDERED VERY POORLY.

OYSTERS: The point of my story, that fried oysters are always bland and tasteless, should suggest something to you. Fried oysters are bland and tasteless.

But, even if you didn't know that when you ordered them, you were perfectly aware that raw, uber-expensive oysters are bland and tasteless. In fact, you've told me so approximately 29 times.

So why did you order them? Does frying something in breadcrumbs EVER add flavor? Do onion rings taste more oniony than an actual onion? (correct answer: no). Does fried zucchini taste like, well, anything whatsoever? (correct answer: bread crumbs, possibly.) Was merely deep frying something you don't normally like going to translate it into something wonderful? Seems dubious.

FISH: I thought about getting the fish. But, notice that after the waiter described it I steered away. Let's review exactly what he said: "It is kind of like sea bass. It is a light, flaky, delicate fish with a mild flavor."

Now, you've chosen to target in on the first part of that statement: "It is kind of like sea bass." Two reasons that is a bad decision:

1. We've been out to restaurants together plenty of times when I've asked that question. Every single time the waiter has analogized the flavor of the fish to another fish they've been DEAD WRONG. Remember Nava? Waiters are never, ever, right about this. Their opinion on this regard should be wholly disregarded.
2. The waiter, himself, obviously contradicted himself. His NEXT sentence was a description of NOT sea bass. He gave you ample opportunity to determine that he was an idiot.

Now, what I did is focus on the second sentence. Let's dissect: Light = flavorless. Flaky = no texture. Mild flavor = suitable for grinding into baby food.

What else should the waiter have done? Shoot up flares and use bright orange flags to direct you away from this dish?

Now, there's one obvious response, which is: why should you have to carefully avoid bad dishes if it's a good restaurant? Two responses:

First, it wasn't a good restaurant. I rate by the meal, I ordered what, my guess is, were two of the best dishes on the menu, and it still only got a B+/A-. A good restaurant has at least one A dish.

Second, there aren't any restaurants where every dish is good. Any restaurant with more than a half dozen items has a stinker on there.

Now, the person who admittedly lost in the deal was Michael"e." There was NO indication that the crab cakes would blow. In fact, several Washington newspapers gave them good reviews. If they did in fact blow, and they looked pretty tiny and non-crablike, then Michael"e got a raw deal.

RM wrote:

Which brings us to Kurt's Lobster. Now, by way of disclosure I did not eat it. But in my defense, had I ordered it I would not have eaten it. I have never, in my life, seen such a dry lobster.
Let's put that in context. I have lived most of my life in Florida where tourists who believe that "seafood" describes a fixed set of items available in four regions. Florida has no lobsters, yet has a huge demand for them. A huge indiscriminate demand. We get the dregs, and there is no public pressure to do anything to help an already sorry situation. Additionally, I have eaten at Red Lobster. Multiple times. I say this not in hopes you will feel sorry for me and let me win at board games, but merely to show I know from awful lobster.
Nothing I know of in a kitchen can do that to food. Kurt's lobster had apparently been the the first test case for the Penguin's dehydrating machine. It makes good sense; embassy row was right there. You'd hate to get all the way up to NYC and find out the gun only works on sea-bugs, or has some other diplomat incompatibility. Anyway, dry. Mathew level dry. The meat is sticking to the damn shell dry. (Aren't you from fricking Lobstertown, USA?)

It is important that you put this in context for everybody, because it helps to explain why you are so pitifully uninformed about lobster.

VERY IMPORTANT POINT: Lobster pulls away from the shell as it cooks. You said "[t]he meat is sticking to the samn shell dry." Lobster doesn't RE-ATTACH itself to the shell once it becomes dried out. It pulls farther away from the shell and shrinks. Dried out lobster is easier to remove from the shell, not harder. If there is a legitimate criticism of this lobster, it is that it was undercooked, but since I fear not death, I like lightly cooked meals.

Now, were there any other indications that it was dry? Well, the shell was dry, possibly because they dried it off before they served it.

Was the shell overly-red a la creepy Red Lobster? No. In fact, it still had streaks of green, another indication it was more likely to be undercooked than overcooked.

Now, the lobster WAS very small, something I complained about in my original post. Perhaps you thought the entire creature shrunk from overcooking? To ease your mind, know that lobsters come in many sizes. This was a small one. But not an overcooked one.

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RM
Gay Lion



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 302
Location: Between the couch cushions

Posted: Mon May 30, 2005 5:31 pm Post subject:

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Quote:

OYSTERS: The point of my story, that fried oysters are always bland and tasteless, should suggest something to you. Fried oysters are bland and tasteless.

But, even if you didn't know that when you ordered them, you were perfectly aware that raw, uber-expensive oysters are bland and tasteless. In fact, you've told me so approximately 29 times.

So why did you order them?

Because The fried oysters at Berns are one of my favorite appetizers and the fried oysters that everybody except I ate at two.urban.licks received rave reviews. (side note, someone needs to slap me every time I listen to citysearch reviews)

Quote:

Does frying something in breadcrumbs EVER add flavor?

Yes, absolutely. if you don't think that then we were remiss in letting you go back up north before learning it.

Quote:

Do onion rings taste more oniony than an actual onion? (correct answer: no).

Here you seem to be confusing adding flavor with intensifying flavor.

Quote:

Does fried zucchini taste like, well, anything whatsoever? (correct answer: bread crumbs, possibly.)

Oh. I see. Your tongue is broken. Good call on the career change. Should you want to appear to be one of the normals, like for a firm dinner or a low-effort halloween costume, fried zucchini does indeed taste like things. Delicious, subtle things.

Quote:

Was merely deep frying something you don't normally like going to translate it into something wonderful? Seems dubious.

Yet empirically validated. I offer into evidence the afore mentioned zucchini, various and sundry vegetables arriving under the moniker "tempura", soy, okra (OK, so not a lot of meats), and as I said, Oysters.

Quote:

FISH: I thought about getting the fish. But, notice that after the waiter described it I steered away. Let's review exactly what he said: "It is kind of like sea bass. It is a light, flaky, delicate fish with a mild flavor."

snip

Now, what I did is focus on the second sentence. Let's dissect: Light = flavorless. Flaky = no texture. Mild flavor = suitable for grinding into baby food.

My favorite fish in the world are described using those first words. You also failed to show how the menu or the waiter clued me in to what was my actual complaint in the review: they cooked it to the point it could be tacked to the sole of a shoe to provide high cost footwear that is all the rage in Beverly Hills next season. Filet 'o Sole indeed, Kenneth Cole.

Quote:

First, it wasn't a good restaurant. I rate by the meal, I ordered what, my guess is, were two of the best dishes on the menu, and it still only got a B+/A-. A good restaurant has at least one A dish.

According to how you started the reviews in this thread, that would mean B+ meal, A- restaurant. Apparently we shifted somewhere along the line. The idea of a rating system where a mediocre restaurant gets an A- if you order correctly seems front-loaded, but it's your system.

Quote:

VERY IMPORTANT POINT: Lobster pulls away from the shell as it cooks. You said "[t]he meat is sticking to the samn shell dry." Lobster doesn't RE-ATTACH itself to the shell once it becomes dried out. It pulls farther away from the shell and shrinks. Dried out lobster is easier to remove from the shell, not harder. If there is a legitimate criticism of this lobster, it is that it was undercooked, but since I fear not death, I like lightly cooked meals. Now, were there any other indications that it was dry? Well, the shell was dry, possibly because they dried it off before they served it.

Or, possibly, meat which looked like those t-shirts which they sell at tourist areas which need to be soaked in water to change from a .5in cube to a t-shirt. It was like space lobster!

Hey, if it was undercooked, so be it. Even the most undercooked lobster tends to have moisture inside the shell. If it was undercooked I guess they used a hypodermic needle to remove the moisture from the inside of the shell carefully going through the joint so as not to crack what was apparently a kevlar® shell. Given the choice I would presume over-cooked to the point that the protein re-adhered since that would just mean the kitchen was negligent as opposed to using cartoonish supervillainy to semi-cook your meal. You ate it; I defer to your judgement.

Quote:

Now, the lobster WAS very small, something I complained about in my original post. Perhaps you thought the entire creature shrunk from overcooking? To ease your mind, know that lobsters come in many sizes. This was a small one.

Blast! By acknowledging that smaller lobsters exist and often taste better in my original review I communicated my ignorance to their existence. And people wonder why I don't even try to communicate. It's JUST TOO HARD.

- Robert J. Morrison
Stormtrooper in drag

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andrew
Site Admin



Joined: 26 Apr 2005

Posted: Mon May 30, 2005 8:48 pm Post subject: Re: Dinner, Saturday May 28

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Kurt wrote:

OYSTERS: The point of my story, that fried oysters are always bland and tasteless, should suggest something to you. Fried oysters are bland and tasteless.

Posts: 242
Location: Mars

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Kurt



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 231
Location: Atlanta, GA

As Robert mentions, I have no had the flash-fried oysters at Two (urban licks) twice, and they were both times delicious. Furthermore I don't think it's wise to badmouth an entire cooking method. And I'm told deep fried Snickers and Twinkies are awesome. (by Food Network)

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Posted: Mon May 30, 2005 10:48 pm Post subject: Re: Dinner, Saturday May 28

[quote](#) [edit](#) [x](#) [ip](#)

andrew wrote:

Kurt wrote:

OYSTERS: The point of my story, that fried oysters are always bland and tasteless, should suggest something to you. Fried oysters are bland and tasteless.

As Robert mentions, I have no had the flash-fried oysters at Two (urban licks) twice, and they were both times delicious. Furthermore I don't think it's wise to badmouth an entire cooking method. And I'm told deep fried Snickers and Twinkies are awesome. (by Food Network)

A. I don't dislike fried oysters. I rather like them. I just don't think they are normally very flavorful. Despite my best attempts to explain this concept to Robert, "flavorful" and "enjoyable to eat / delicious" are not the same thing. Pasta & rice are my two favorite foods. Neither has a strong flavor. Bug spray has a very strong taste. I do not like to eat bug spray.

I like fried oysters a lot, especially from a place called Woodman's in Massachusetts, the restaurant which, on a random pro-Boston note, invented them. Even there though, I wouldn't say they're extremely flavorful. In fact, I put a decent amount of lemon juice, ketchup, etc. on them to add flavor.

B. The preceding point is important to understanding why I am NOT "badmouth[ing] an entire cooking method." I like fried food. A lot. It's cruchy and greasy and hot. Frying, however, does distinctly NOT increase the flavor of the battered ingredient. Flavor leaves the food and enters the hot oil.

Try this fun experiment: Heat some oil in a skillet. Add a bunch of red pepper flakes. Let cook for 30 seconds. Turn off heat and let sit for a few minutes. Now taste the oil Wala! It is spicier than before! Has flavor been spontaneously generated? No. Some of the oil that gives the sensation of heat have left the chilis and entered the oil. The chili flakes now taste LESS strongly than before.

The same thing happens with fried zuchini and onion rings. Some of the flavor leaves the food. Does that mean onion rings aren't delicious? Certainly not.

Now, Robert has chosen to have his cake and eat it to, asserting both that frying "intensifies" the flavor and that my problem is that my defective tongue, unsuitable for being a chef, cannot detect "subtle" taste.

However, a careful review of the dictionary reveals that "intense" means "displaying a distinctive feature to an extreme degree," whereas "subtle" means "so slight as to be difficult to detect or describe."

Admittedly, this contradictory argument is more persuasive than his point about my lobster being dry, which has now shifted from it being dry because it was "sticking to the damn shell" to the less exactly-opposite-of-reality but far less persuasive and obviously non-falsifiable claim that my taste in lobster must have been bad because the lobster "looked like those t-shirts which they sell at tourist areas."

Yes, Robert, I ate that lobster despite that it appeared to be a t-shirt purchased in a tourist shop. Oh, what a fool I've been!

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andrew
Site Admin



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 242
Location: Mars

Posted: Tue May 31, 2005 12:20 am Post subject: Re: Dinner, Saturday May 28

[quote](#) [edit](#) [x](#) [ip](#)

[quote="Kurt"]

andrew wrote:

A. I don't dislike fried oysters. I rather like them. I just don't think they are normally very flavorful. Despite my best attempts to explain this concept to Robert, "flavorful" and "enjoyable to eat / delicious" are not the same thing. Pasta & rice are my two favorite foods. Neither has a strong flavor. Bug spray has a very strong taste. I do not like to eat bug spray.

I am forced to agree. Most of my enjoyment of oysters is texture-related.

Furthermore I must admit that I assumed you were claiming that deep-frying was an inferior cooking method, in no small part because I only read about 1/8th of what you wrote...my bad.

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RM
Gay Lion



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 302
Location: Between the couch cushions

Posted: Tue May 31, 2005 1:09 pm Post subject:

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Quote:

Now, Robert has chosen to have his cake and eat it to, asserting both that frying "intensifies" the flavor and that my problem is that my defective tongue, unsuitable for being a chef, cannot detect "subtle" taste.

In two posts you do it and then attribute it to me the person who called you on it.

Balsy, sir. Balsy.



- Robert J. Morrison
Stormtrooper in drag

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Kurt



Joined: 26 Apr 2005
Posts: 231
Location: Atlanta, GA

Posted: Tue May 31, 2005 10:56 pm Post subject:

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

woah there, friend.

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