

## FOOD & STYLE

A Review of

### Carbon Beach Club Restaurant



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Malibu, CA 90265  
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Price: \$\$\$\$

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When it comes to steak and seafood, we Palisadians are mighty lucky.

We have endless options minutes away by car in Santa Monica, or we can turn the other direction on PCH and head to the 'Bu. So what is the advantage of driving up PCH to the Carbon Beach Club Restaurant located in the tony Malibu Beach Inn?

Plenty, as it turns out.

Let's start with the obvious: location. Yes, many restaurants have terrific, panoramic Pacific views. However, Malibu Beach Inn's restaurant is right on the beach. There is no bad seat in the house. Yes, that patio—with the nearby Malibu Pier and Santa Monica shimmering in the background to your left and Point Dume and Zuma Beach looming in the distance to your right—is pretty hard to beat during magic hour.

Even our indoor table (on this windy night) had sliding windows that gave good view and overlooked the rocks below. You really couldn't get any closer to the ocean unless you were floating.

Another reason to make this trip? The food really is *that* good.

Definitely start your starters with the *Artisan Cheese Board & Charcuterie Platter* (\$19/\$26), a nice spread of olives, quince, honeycomb, prosciutto, *fromage* and black and green olives.

It'll curb your appetite just long enough before *Grilled Spanish Octopus* (\$20) arrives. Ample colorful, mouth-melting morsels of octopus—well-charred and not rubbery—lie atop white beans, piquillo pepper, watercress and a brush of red sauce.

*Hamachi Ceviche* (\$20) is another way to go. It's enhanced by Peruvian cancha corn and aji amarillo with colorful tortilla chips to push it with.

*Grilled Asparagus* (\$13), covered in prosciutto and Manchego cheese and topped by a big fried egg, tastes as succulent as it is savory.

Definitely try the *Moules Frites* (\$20), sauteed Prince Edward Island mussels wallowing in a bath of cur-

ry-like coconut saffron sauce. Be sure to order extra slices of Ciabatta with which to mop up the sauce.

A shotgun of lean frites, crisp and not overly cooked or salty, comes with a dollop of Sir Kensington ketchup. Meanwhile, *Linguine Vongole* (\$24) masterfully utilizes Little Neck clams on a bed of pasta with a white wine reduction sauce, Marzano tomato, Italian basil and burrata.

*First of the Season Salad* (\$20) is a powerhouse with arugula, radish, peppercorn, English peas and ricotta along the bottom. This provided a fresh-tasting complement to the entrées en route.

Those dishes included a Mediterranean *Whole Branzino* (\$40) that is a sight to behold: an entire head-to-tail presentation, crispily cooked and nigh-buried in arugula, fennel, olives, roasted tomatoes and lemon. Its innards are white, fluffy and mouth-melting while the skin is crunchy.

From the steak options, *30-Day Dry-Aged Grilled New York Steak* (\$50) delivers. The hulking slab is marinated in red wine and port, giving this steak flavor but not of the expected smoky kind. Inside, it is pinkish and juicy to perfection.

The meat arrives surrounded by seasonal vegetables including baby zucchini, carrots and a mouth-watering, grilled-tasting cooked asparagus.

Also winning here: the hospitality of our knowledgeable hosts. Wine Director/Sommelier Laurie Sutton was on top of every course, matching our meals to entries from their mile-long selection of French, Italian and California wines, whether it was Cabernet Bordeaux or Pinot Grigio.

We also tried *Chateau D'Esclans "Rock Angel"* (\$14) and *Antinori "Cervaro della Sala" Chardonnay from Umbria* (\$13)—not one false note.

Executing Chef Victor Morales' epicurean delights, Sous Chef Anthony Polanco proved down to earth and passionate about his craft. While Mixologist Josh Curtis was not in the house when we dined, his handiwork sure was. The Old Fashioned-esque *Curtis Sidecar* (Courvoisier with pressed oranges and lemons in a sugar-rimmed glass) was the best drink we tried. *Carbon 47* (Knob Creek rye with port, mole and Ango bitters) proved to be a stiff drink.

Cucumber these days is very en vogue at the Westside's best bars, and I gotta say that the cuke-y, Kermit the



Grilled Asparagus is covered with prosciutto, Manchego cheese and an egg.

Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer



Grilled Spanish Octopus

Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer



Butterscotch Budino

Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

Frog-green Hendricks gin-based *Beach Access* was outstanding.

For a much sweeter affair, go with a *Verbena*—employing an alchemy of Bombay Sapphire gin, Il Gusto Limoncello, Ginger Beer, lemon verbena garnish and fresh lemon. Cocktails run \$15 each.

There are many avenues for dessert (\$12) and no dead ends. *Tres Leches Cake* is a solid creation with blueberry compote and sea salt caramel gelato. *Butterscotch Budino*, a jar filled

with pistachio, chocolate shavings and whipped cream, pairs perfectly with a cappuccino.

Or you can just submit to the majesty that is their signature *CBC Deep Dish Chocolate Chip Cookie*, served in a skillet with vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce (a survivor from when David Geffen owned the hotel a few years ago).

So add Carbon Beach Club to your list of area restaurants that won't disappoint on any level.