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SERVING ATLANTA'S STYLISH NORTHSIDE

POINTS NORTH

“Livingston Restaurant + Bar”

By: Bre Humphries

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Livingston Restaurant + Bar

Written by Bre Humphries

As cliché as it may sound, there's nothing quite like the tried-and-true dinner-and-a-show combination to create the perfect night on the town. Yet in the year and a half it's been opened, I had yet to dine at Livingston Restaurant + Bar, the “official restaurant of the Fox Theatre.” So when the opportunity presented to check out Chef Gary Mennie's new summer dishes before the opening night performance of “CATS,” I pounced on it.



Take it from me, there's nothing cliché about Livingston. Located inside The Georgian Terrace, known as Atlanta's “modern classic” hotel, Livingston is the perfect marriage of traditional elegance and contemporary style. Ornate architecture, white marble columns and glamorous glass chandeliers are juxtaposed with up-tempo music and sleek, modish décor like metallic accents, rich chocolate hues and dark hardwood floors.

To celebrate her birthday, I had brought my mother along for this theatrical evening, and I knew we were in for a special production when the hostess escorted us to a window-side table with a front-row view of the Fox across the street. We began with a toast over cool summer cocktails, a Pomegranate Fizz for Mom, not too sweet, not too tart, and a Mean Green for me, which is best described as a cucumber mojito. The beverages were just the refreshment we needed after the persistent late-summer heat that had left us haggard over recent weeks, and we sipped them gratefully as we began our taste-test through the menu items Mennie has created specifically for this season.

After a trio of breads (my favorite was the homemade onion foccaccia), we dove into a few of Livingston's new appetizer options. The potato croquettes, inspired by Mennie's recent trip to Spain, were at once crispy and creamy, with a hint of chorizo and tomato and a mango-lime sauce that simply made the dish. But the tuna crudo, thick, fresh squares of ahi tuna served with pistachio pesto, candied mustard, lime sauce and leaves of lemon mint, was my personal favorite – each bite was like a taste of summer itself, with a combination of tang and herbs.

Next, we traded the cocktails for cool and crisp glasses of white wine from Northern Italy to accompany two farm-fresh salads, one composed of Bibb lettuce topped with pickled red onions, carrots and cucumbers and drizzled with buttermilk dressing and the other featuring thick slices of heirloom tomatoes alongside a blend of fromage blanc and basil mint puree. Of the two featured summer entrees, the lamb chops with garlic sausage, fennel and basil are a good, hearty option, but I personally preferred the lighter Atlantic halibut with braised baby artichokes, fennel, sugar snap peas and candied orange. Crusted with sea salt that worked well with the sweet orange and a tangy lemon jus, the fish had a crispy exterior, but flaked off nicely as I cut into it. Topping it off was a sprinkle of faux caviar made from vinaigrette and gelatin, an ingredient that has recently been reintroduced to the world of haute cuisine.

And of course, it wouldn't be a birthday celebration or special night on the town without dessert, so we sampled two – the homemade ice cream sandwich made of strawberry yogurt between two thin slices of pistachio angel food cake and topped with strawberry scented popcorn, and the blueberry pie, made with fresh, juicy blueberries inside pastries that resemble fluffy, melt-in-your-mouth empanadas and served with crème fraiche ice cream and lemon verbena dipping sauce. It was the perfect grand finale to our meal, but dinner as a whole was an outstanding opening act we hope to catch again next time we take in a production at the Fox.

Livingston Restaurant + Bar

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