



# PUT A FORK IN IT ATLANTA

“Livingston Charms With Southern-Inspired Cuisine”

By: Blair Branch

August 10, 2010

<http://putaforkinitatlanta.blogspot.com/>

Tuesday, August 10, 2010

## Livingston charms with southern-inspired cuisine

After what seemed like ages of being cooped up in our apartment, dining on healthy, home cooked meals, the B.F. and I were itching to try a new restaurant to celebrate our first year of dating bliss. Yep—that’s right. It’s been a whole year of coupledness and since most of our dates revolve around amazing food, I was really putting the pressure on him to choose wisely. Since moving in together in late February, we’ve been trying to scale-back on our gluttonous desires, not only to save our (read, his) wallets, but our waistlines as well, so I was especially excited to see which restaurant he would choose.

After a last-minute change of heart, he decided on **Livingston** in the Georgian Terrace Hotel. I’ve been obsessed with the Georgian Terrace Hotel since I moved to Atlanta when I was 18 and lived in a 400-square-foot studio above Baraonda, directly across the street. I used to stroll up and down Peachtree in front of the Fox, gazing at the southern aristocrats valeting their Jags at the hotel, hoping to be one of them someday. To me, the Georgian Terrace was the epitome of class.



Though less intimidating and not quite as bustling as I remember it, the Georgian Terrace still oozes class and southern charm. Rarely at a loss for words, I was completely awe-struck upon entrance into the restaurant. It is, by far, one of the most beautiful restaurants I’ve ever seen. The abundance of white marble, the high ceilings, the deep wooden bar, the spiral staircase, the nearly floor-to-ceiling windows with Peachtree views, not to mention the stunning chandelier in the entranceway, all made for a jaw-dropping first impression. I wondered, though, while

looking around at the starkly occupied restaurant, how could this place not be absolutely packed on a Saturday at 8 p.m.?

Despite the lack of patrons, Livingston was nothing short of amazing. Maybe it was the fact that I’d saved up calories all week for this meal; maybe it was the fact that I was giddy because of our anniversary; maybe it was the fact that I was giddy from the two pinot grigios on an empty stomach...but whatever it was, the food that night was some of the best I’ve had in recent memory.

The menu is divided up into bites and entrees, with a special menu for theatre patrons. The bites consist of two, four and six bite dishes/appetizers. Though the B.F. and I weren’t really planning on a tapas-style anniversary, too many of the smaller bite dishes caught our eye, and we decided to forgo ordering traditional entrees in favor of trying a bunch of different things.

After starting with a half-bottle of wine—I love when restaurants do half bottles—we proceeded to make our selections. Basically, we read the menu aloud to each other and after every dish said, “Ooooo...that sounds good!” With so many yummy-sounding items I didn’t know where to start. Short rib sliders? Livingston cracker jax? Kobe beef tartare? I’ll take one of everything? Needless to say, it was a tough decision. We finally compromised and chose three dishes to start: crab cakes, lobster fritters and papas fritas. Welcome to deep-fried heaven.

If you’re a frequent reader of my blog, (basically just my mother and the B.F.), you’re aware of my love for all things crab-cake. It was a given that we’d be ordering the Peekytoe crab fritters from the four bites section. The fritters had plenty of crab and were served with a toasted sesame drizzle that complemented well and added a unique twist. The portion size was good for the \$9 price tag, and since it was just the two of us, there were definitely more than four bites to this dish.

Our next dish was more fried seafood, in the form of Lobster fritters. The fried batter of the fritter was buttery and smooth, and there was a generous portion of lobster per bite. The accompanying sauce was a zingy remoulade that also served as a delicious dipping sauce for our other dishes.

Potatoes are a food group for me, and I love them cooked any way under the sun. Mashed, steamed, deep fried—it doesn’t matter. At Livingston, Gabby’s “papas fritas” were a truly creative take on a standard potato. The menu describes them as potato gnocchi. I describe them as creamy mashed potatoes, somehow deep fried. Whatever the description, they are amazing little nuggets.

Continuing with the fried food extravaganza, we decided on one of the server-suggested specials, the fried okra. Fried okra has been a staple in my family’s household as long as I can remember, and one of the few veggies (if you can call it a veggie) that I’d eat as a child. I’m consistently disappointed with the soggy, greasy mess I’m often faced with when ordering it in restaurants, but Livingston gets it right. Whole okra are lightly battered and fried just enough to crunch without the soggy and dripping fat.

Though we were nearly stuffed, the Beef short rib ravioli sounded too good to miss. And it truly was the highlight of our meal. The beef inside was tender and rich, and the creamy sauce was delightfully buttery, but not overpowering. These suckers were, hands down, the best thing I’ve put in my mouth. EVER. I wanted to order a second serving of them, but I knew I had to save room for dessert.

In lieu of trying something inventive and different, (strawberry popcorn, pistachio cake and rhubarb, anyone?), I stuck to old faithful—chocolate. The dish was simply called Chocolate, but was a decadent combination of chocolate cake, panna cotta and espresso ice cream. Since we ate this, I’ve been buying coffee ice cream, trying to get a mere smidgen of the amazing taste of this dessert in my mouth.

Our server was polite and attentive, though never intrusive. The manager came by to check on us, and she even took care of our dessert since we were celebrating our anniversary. Even if the dessert wasn’t on the house, the bill would’ve been well under \$100, even with tip.

The meal at Livingston was a true highlight, and I hope that the lack of patrons wasn’t indicative of things to come. The location is superb and the food is some of Atlanta’s best. All in all, a perfect, delicious anniversary!

*~Blair Branch*

*Livingston is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner*