

VALENTINE'S DAY CAFE ANNIE



OYSTERS & SEAFOOD BAR

EAST COAST OYSTERS	w Creamy Avocado Salsa & Handmade Crackers	6 for \$22
GULF COAST OYSTERS	w Gulf Coast Cocktail Sauce & Handmade Crackers	6 for \$18
WILD GULF SHRIMP COCKTAIL	w Remoulade & Gulf Coast Cocktail Sauce	12 for \$24
MAINE LOBSTER COCKTAIL	w Avocado & Jicama Louie Dressing	4 for \$38
YELLOW TAIL SASHIMI	w Sushi Rice, Dashi Dressing & Edamame Puree	6 for \$18
MAKI ROLL	w Ahi Tuna & Scallops Avocado Wasabi Dressing	8 for \$18

CLASSICS FOR THE TABLE

GULF CRAB TOSTADAS	w Avocado & Cabbage Slaw	4 for \$28
BACON WRAPPED QUAIL	w Jalapeño & Smoked Chile Buttermilk Sauce	6 for \$20
CHEESE PLATE	Sottocenere, Mt. Tam, Tarantaise, Ossau Iraty Fourme d'Ambert, TX Gold Cheddar Marcona Almonds, TX Honey, Fig Jam & Toast	\$32

APPETIZERS

GULF COAST CRAB CAKE	w Charred Chile Remoulade & Lime Butter Sauce	\$16
MARINATED OCTOPUS	w Edamame & Seaweed Salad Miso Dressing	\$16
STEAK TARTAR	w Shaved Black Truffles & Egg Yolk	\$26
AHI TUNA CARPACCIO	w Avocado & Cucumber Seaweed Seasoning	\$20
LOBSTER BISQUE	w Creamy Lobster Salad	\$18
TORTILLA SOUP	w Avocado Relish & Queso Fresco	\$14
MUSHROOM SOUP	w Huitlacoche & Duck Prosciutto	\$16
CAESAR SALAD	w Parmesan & Sour Dough Croutons	\$14
KALE & ENDIVE SALAD	w Grilled Bacon, Walnuts, Dried Apples & Parmesan	\$18

TEXAS SIGNATURES

GULF RED SNAPPER	w Edamame Broth, Sticky Rice & Seaweed Seasoning	\$45
SCOTTISH SALMON	w Creamy Black Lentils, Applewood Bacon & Fennel	\$45
WOOD GRILLED LOBSTER	w Lobster Crepe & Lobster Butter Sauce	\$68
ROASTED PHEASANT	w Wood Grilled Bacon & Cippolini Onions Fried Sage	\$48
WOOD GRILLED RABBIT	w Garlic Cloves & Rosemary Grilled Fennel & Berry Mustard	\$45

WOOD GRILLED STEAKS & ROASTS

THE CLASSIC RIBEYE	[14 oz.] USDA PRIME 30 Day Wet Aged + Air Dried	\$55
THE NEW YORK STRIP STEAK	[12 oz.] USDA PRIME 30 Day Wet Aged + 30 Day Dry Aged	\$68
SLOW ROASTED PRIME RIB	[12 oz.] USDA PRIME Horseradish Cream [Limited]	\$55
TENDERLOIN OF BEEF	Coffee Roasted w Red Wine Butter Sauce	\$55

SIDES

CREAMY POLENTA	w Fontina Cheese & Tomato Sauce Parmesan	\$12
WHIPPED POTATOES ALIGOT	w Cheese, Green Onions & Beef Cracklings	\$12
STEAK FRIES & ONIONS	w Smoked Cheddar Dipping Sauce	\$12
FINGERLING POTATOES	w Rosemary, Garlic & Lemon	\$10
GLAZED MUSHROOMS	w Crème Fraiche & Cotija Cheese	\$13
ASPARAGUS	w Lemon & Herbs	\$14
CARROTS	w Ginger, Honey & Vinegar	\$10
SAUTEED SPINACH	w Garlic	\$14
BROCCOLINI	w Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Garlic & Lemon	\$10

THE STORY OF CAFE ANNIE

Is it all just a tall tale? If memory has its way, with its knack for adding shimmering embellishments, then maybe so. But somewhere at the core there must be at least a modicum of the truth. So here's the truth, maybe with just a few flourishes.

I moved to Houston in 1981. Everything I owned was in my car. I was young, so that circumstance seemed fitting. But I was much more than just moving to Houston. I was chasing a girl. At the time, she just happened to coincide with the geography. I had no plans to stay for very long, but long enough to test the shimmering waters of love. And, as a side note, I thought I should test the depth of my curiosity for cooking. I had just finished my PhD in Biochemistry at the University of California at Riverside. During those academic days, my childhood love of cooking continually grew and, given my acquired skills for reading and research, I had expanded my knowledge of cooking to all that was available in the literature. Bookstores were my library. My early reputation was that I was the cook who always had a book under his arm. The bookish moniker stuck and I'm still stuck on the girl. We've been married for nearly 35 years. And she would figure prominently in the fame of the restaurant. I suppose her side of the story would sound much the same with the exception that she would possibly be more emphatic about the point that without her, I would be nowhere. So, given that locality is circumstance and she is my locality, I'm here.

At that time, now decades gone, Nouvelle French cuisine was at its height and everyone felt that it was a trend that had to be mastered. So I followed suit experimenting with novel combinations and eccentric ideas and ingredients and intricate plate presentations. But sometimes the novel is just a gimmick and a gimmick can hardly be deemed authentic. In the end, I always felt that simple meals realized with a direct approach and a sense of tradition was what good cooking was all about. 'A meal is a measure of the locality' was an idea that appealed to me. And the locality was Texas and, more precisely, Houston.

I strived to develop a cooking style that incorporated the many local influences of Houston. Texas BBQ traditions and lore had an immediate allure, as did Mexican cooking; but Thai and Vietnamese cooking had by that time established a strong foothold in Houston. Along with some other Texas chefs, this pursuit of Texas cooking became recognized as Southwest Cuisine. It was celebrated all over the country (as well as copied all over the country). I suppose we should all be flattered.

Some nice dishes came out of those years that gained national acclaim – the Crab Tostada, the Black Bean Terrine, the Coffee Roasted Filet of Beef, the Cilantro Mussel Soup, the Rabbit Enchilada. The catalogue is even longer now. And all the awards – from a James Beard Award to Who's Who in American Cooking to, just recently, being named #53 on the 101 best restaurants in the US by The Daily Meal – are wonderful. But still, a nice piece of beef or a fillet of fish and a glowing wood fire is all I really need. Some coarse salt and a wedge of lime would be nice.

Mimi & Robert Del Grande