

## Longtime Westport Steakhouse Adds Bistro Service

If you're hoping to get away from the crowds and noise of the typical lunch rush, the new bistro service at Dierdorf and Hart's is an ideal solution.

The upscale restaurant, known for its succulent steaks and luxurious aesthetics, began offering a more casual menu in late April. And while the price points are lower, their legendary service and elegant atmosphere haven't diminished at all.

Two friends and I decided to sample the new service on a sunny Friday in May. Unlike other restaurants, where the mid-day din forces diners to shout to be heard across their table, the interior of Dierdorf and Hart's was quiet and relaxing. We were quickly seated at a table near a wall of windows that afforded us a nice view of Westport Plaza.

We decided to start by sharing an appetizer of calamari. Large chunks of squid and artichoke were lightly coated in a cornmeal batter and served with a tangy Dijon sauce in lieu of the traditional marinara.

For our main course, we had a substantial list of options from which to choose. En-

trée salads included Chicken Mushroom Caesar and Cobb; indecisive diners could pair one of Dierdorf's freshly made soups with a house or Caesar salad. The menu also offers a wide variety of sandwiches and burgers. Visitors with hearty appetites may select from entrees like top sirloin, Cajun chicken penne and chicken pot pie, all of which come a side salad.

One of my companions opted for the Chicken Caprisi sandwich, which consisted of a marinated chicken breast layered with fresh basil, tomato, mozzarella and roasted garlic aioli on herbed focaccia. Sides included house-made potato chips, steak fries or Napa cabbage slaw. He went with the steak fries and was impressed by the enormous, lightly seasoned potato wedges that arrived with his sandwich.

My other friend chose the restaurant's unusual take on chicken salad: Roasted chicken, red grape marmalade, diced celery, toasted almonds, hard-boiled eggs, sliced tomato and mixed greens served on cranberry French toast. She quickly proclaimed it "heaven on a plate."

I ordered the Steakhouse BBQ Burger,



topped with a sweet and smoky BBQ sauce, applewood smoked bacon and Gouda cheese. The thick patty was juicy and perfectly cooked, though it was impossible to finish both it and the side order of those massive steak fries.

We were far too stuffed to attempt a dessert order, but the offerings were tempting. They included coconut roulade (mascarpone cheese in a sponge cake with fresh lemon zest and coconut flakes), carrot cake and peanut butter chocolate cheesecake, among others.

Dierdorf and Hart's is located at 323 Westport Plaza. The new bistro menu is available Monday through Saturday starting at 11 a.m.