Last week I had the opportunity to visit the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles to try the new Beer Pairing Menu at Harvest. My friend Katie from Beneath the Chandelier and I got to chat with Executive Chef Tiffany Tooker and Director of Food and Beverage Rick Remington. Every Thursday in October, The Harvest Restaurant offers a pairing dinner for $35/person. With four courses paired perfectly, it's well worth it. Katie and I discussed with Chef Tiffany and Mr. Remington
that we aren't beer drinkers normally but still enjoyed this meal. I actually felt that by pushing me out of my comfort zone, I've discovered beers I would have never touched if it weren't for these pairings. It was a great experience and I'm glad I've opened myself up to trying things, like beer, I would normally stay away from. The service was spectacular, the staff was very accommodating and the experience was terrific. Let's dive into what we got to eat!

**Diver Sea Scallop**: bacon wrapped diver scallop with an apricot glaze paired with...

**Stella Artois Lager**: full flavored lager with a hoppy aroma and hint of fruit followed by a crisp, mild bitter lemon finish

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This was the first time I've had scallops and even though I was intimidated at first, I loved them. I swear, wrap anything in bacon and I'm a happy girl. The scallops were seared and so tender they practically melted in your mouth. There was a sweet and salty combo thanks to the bacon and apricot glaze. It gave this dish a nice, satisfying balance. The crispy rice noodles on top gave it a crunchy finish that rounded out the texture without effecting the flavors. Stella was a great pairing for this dish because the beer did not overpower the food. It was very light with subtle flavors which was perfect for the scallops since they don't have much flavor on their own. I really enjoyed this beer.
**Pheasant Run Wedge Salad:** crisp iceberg lettuce with applewood smoked bacon, heirloom tomatoes marinated with herb vinaigrette and buttermilk blue cheese dressing

*paired with...*

**ChiTown Pier Pale Ale:** a fragrant bouquet of hops with a mild fruity flavor and crisp clean finish that is the hallmark of pale ale's

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I was thrown a bit by the salad being the second course. Typically, I'd expect to have the salad first followed by an appetizer like the scallops. I understand why it was second though. The blue cheese dressing had a stronger flavor than the scallops. I'm not a fan of blue cheese but because the dressing had a buttery element, the tanginess of the cheese was tamed a bit. The smoked bacon gave a nice salty flavor and the marinated mushrooms really rounded it out. The Pale Ale was a great pairing for this salad because the flavor matched the blue cheese perfectly. The flavors of the dish were level with the flavors from the beer. I personally liked the Stella better just in terms of beer because it was a bit sweeter but paired with this dish, it was a home run.
**Wild Mushroom Crusted Filet Mignon:** grilled black angus tenderloin of beef with spinach risotto, oven roasted asparagus and fresh herb demi glaze

*paired with...

**Pheasant Run Rungneck Red Lager:** a rich, deep amber color with soft hop and fruit flavors followed by a lingering clean finish. This beer is made by Leinenkugel specifically for Pheasant Run and is not available anywhere else

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Let me begin by saying I had been craving a juicy steak for quite a while before this night. It was, by far, my favorite plate out of the entire meal. The flavors were incredible, the steak was perfectly cooked to my preference (medium-rare leaning more towards rare), the risotto was delicious and the asparagus cooked perfectly with just a slight bite to it. The crispy onions on top and marinated mushrooms
were a great topping to the filet and the herb demi glaze was the perfect final touch. It was just enough to compliment every aspect of this dish. The lager this was paired with is the brew made specifically for Pheasant Run Inn. It balanced really well with the heavier flavors of the steak and risotto. It was a beautiful color and had a sweet aspect to it that I particularly enjoyed. The finish was a little bitter to me but other than that, I really enjoyed this pairing.
**Kilauea Chocolate Molten Lava Cake:** fresh house made dark chocolate cake filled with warm, decadent chocolate magma topped with Creme Anglaise

*paired with...

**Guinness Stout:** aromas of roasted malt give way to caramel and cocoa flavors that make this the perfect partner for chocolate

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This dessert is a chocolate lovers dream. While speaking to Chef Tiffany and Mr. Remington, we learned that all of the desserts at Harvest are cooked fresh and not brought in frozen. That's impressive to me and I really respect Chef Tiffany for not only creating a great menu but also amazing desserts. I loved this cake because it was a bit thicker in density. It's not spongy like birthday cake which I can't stand. There was a drizzle of white and dark chocolate on the plate with a surprise of raspberry syrup as well. I love raspberry and chocolate so I was thrilled about that. The cake was paired with Guinness Stout. The flavors matched well. They're both strong and bold which works well for dessert. The Guinness was not my favorite of the beers we were served but I was definitely satisfied with the dessert.

Visit Harvest at The Pheasant Run Inn and Spa in St. Charles, IL
every Thursday in October for a chance to try their signature beer pairing menu. Here are some additional photos of the menu.
1 comment:

1.

Ash @ The Nashvillian October 15, 2014 at 11:26 AM

That filet mignon looks incredible! I just want to jump into my screen and devour it! Also, that lava cake...yes, please. This looks like such a fun event!
I'm Christine

I'm a TV obsessed, book loving, celebrity watching, music finding, coffee addict just getting through my 20's in this big city. I'm living life and chasing dreams while experiencing little things. In between welcome to my space where I get to share a little piece of me.

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- September (30)
- August (23)
- July (27)
- June (24)
- May (24)
- April (20)
- March (21)
- February (19)
- January (25)

- 2013 (323)
- December (26)
- November (21)
- October (20)
- September (27)
- August (23)
- July (26)
- June (26)
- May (30)
- April (33)
- March (32)
• ▶ 2012 (350)
  o ▶ December (34)
  o ▶ November (32)
  o ▶ October (33)
  o ▶ September (31)
  o ▶ August (35)
  o ▶ July (25)
  o ▶ June (30)
  o ▶ May (31)
  o ▶ April (27)
  o ▶ March (31)
  o ▶ February (19)
  o ▶ January (22)

• ▶ 2011 (145)
  o ▶ December (36)
  o ▶ November (43)
  o ▶ October (30)
  o ▶ September (14)
  o ▶ August (17)
  o ▶ July (1)
  o ▶ April (1)
  o ▶ February (3)

• ▶ 2010 (1)
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