



A bowl of tomato bisque soup and a glass of whiskey are served on the porch at Rattlesnake Club.
PHOTO/JERI DAVIS

Sound bite

After a well-publicized remodel—and rocky soft opening—Rattlesnake Club appears to finally be finding its groove. A friend invited me to join her group of wine lovers for dinner, allowing me to sample quite a few dishes and some quality vino. Determined to enjoy the night air, they had chosen to dine *al fresco* on the unlighted patio with smartphones and minimal moonlight for illumination. I'm sure it made for an interesting scene to those watching.

A complimentary serving of seasoned focaccia and rolls was enjoyed, which I paired with a decent bowl of roasted tomato bisque (\$9). Seasonal bruschetta (\$9) was topped with tomato, eggplant, onion and herbs—and a really tasty order of steamed mussels (\$15) was served with Spanish-style chorizo in a saffron broth. Large boards of charcuterie (\$21) and cheeses (\$17) came with dishes of housemade pickled mustard seeds and vegetables, and, of course, more bread. There was good variety among the items on the boards, with a large round of *burrata* (fresh Italian cheese) particularly interesting. I found the contrast of creamy-almost-liquid mild cheese strangely appealing against the bolder *fromage*.

A series of 12-inch pizzas followed, including a margherita (\$13), basic pepperoni (\$14) and Le Corrine (\$17). The red sauce was zesty and the thin crusts fairly crisp, but the latter's mix of fennel sausage, soppressata, bacon and rosemary ham was anything but basic. That pie had a lot going on. Though a Rattlesnake burger with hand-cut fries (\$15) normally involves aged white

cheddar, caramelized onion, lettuce and tomato on a housemade bun, the young man who ordered it medium-well skipped all but the cheese, plus a ton of ketchup. I politely declined a taste, but the fries were pretty good.

A healthy portion of very tender, braised short ribs with a delicious zinfandel glaze (\$29) was perched atop grilled asparagus and garlic mashed potatoes—all of the components done perfectly. A plate of grilled Alaskan halibut (\$32) with wild mushroom risotto, heirloom tomato confit and citrus *beurre blanc* was similarly well executed. My order of seared diver scallops (\$25) with shaved artichoke, preserved lemon, crispy prosciutto and parmigiano reggiano was no slouch. The thin, fried meat was like a ham chip, and though I wished there was more of it, the expertly prepared shellfish had my complete attention.

We ended our evening with servings of creme brulee (\$8) and bread pudding (\$10). The custard was smooth with a perfect crunchy top, accompanied by fresh blueberries, strawberries and a schmear of caramel sauce. The same caramel sauce and plenty of thin-sliced sour apple completed a plate of well-received bread pudding; I had to move fast to get a bite in before it was gone. There are a few kinks still to be worked out here and there, but the food at Rattlesnake isn't one of them. □

Rattlesnake Club

606 W. Plumb Lane, 384-2470

Rattlesnake Club is open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., and from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Learn more at rattlesnakeclubreno.com.

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