

Woodinville Weekly

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Pomegranate is a feast for the senses

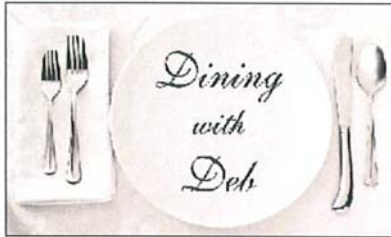
One of my favorite restaurants on the Eastside is Pomegranate Bistro. Whenever I visit this popular Redmond restaurant, I always get great service and terrific food. And by the size of the crowds that spill outside of the place, it's clear that others feel the same way.

Perhaps the reason for Pomegranate's success lies with its owner, Lisa Dupar, caterer extraordinaire and culinary artist. Dupar found her passion for food in her family's kitchen in Atlanta, Georgia, where she developed her talents and skills at a young age. Her mother was not interested in cooking and made a deal with Dupar to make the meals while she did the cleaning. Dupar's first business venture involved selling

decorated cakes to family and friends. After graduating high school, she did an internship at a hotel, followed by a stint in Switzerland where she cooked her way through the country.

and her husband, Jonathan Zimmer (co-owner of the company and also a noted chef), launched Pomegranate. It quickly took off and became a hot neighborhood destination, known for its eclectic bistro cuisine, casual ambiance, jazzy cocktails and extensive wine list.

As you enter the restaurant, you'll quickly notice the kitchen action that's taking place behind a huge wall of glass windows.



Dupar became the Westin Hotel chain's first female chef when she helped open the Palm Court in Seattle.

In 1984, she started Lisa Dupar Catering, which soon became one of the Northwest's leading full-service catering companies.

Two years ago, Dupar

The bistro is actually attached to Dupar's 14,000-square-foot commercial catering facility and at all times of the day and night, there's a culinary circus show going on right in front of diners' eyes. The ambiance of the eatery is cozy and warm, with rustic wood tables, brightly colored



Pomegranate Bistro is located in Redmond.

Photo by Deborah Shaw

cloths on the tables and pictures of oversized fruit on the walls. In one corner is a large wood burning oven, which creates the restaurant's signature fire bread. Nearby is a long community table made of Indonesian wood, where several small groups can sit or one large one. A grab-and-go counter, which serves as the coffee bar and bakery, is located right by the door for convenient access. This is also where the masses mill around waiting patiently for their tables.

Mouths water with the delectable aromas wafting through the place.

As I eagerly peruse the new fall menu one recent evening, it is these aromas

that stimulate my taste buds and cause my stomach to grumble at embarrassingly loud decibels.

Pomegranate regularly rotates their menus, as well as their cocktail and wine lists.

Dupar takes advantage of the harvest bounty that arrives with each season and features dishes made with only the freshest ingredients available.

The cuisine is a mix of regional flavors,

classic French preparations and true southern specialties. The fall menu is chock-full of hearty comfort foods, such as Cabernet braised beef short ribs, served with root veggie mashers, and a grilled apple wood smoked double pork chop with pressed hard apple

cider sauce.

For seafood lovers, there are pan seared diver sea scallops with rosemary veal jus and my personal favorite, pan seared halibut on roasted red and guajillo pepper sauce with corn pudding and crispy cilantro salted yucca strips.

Vegetarians will enjoy the veggie cassoulet or the roasted red chili squash pasta rags with creamy sage blue cheese sauce.

The blue agave lime roasted chicken is a nod to the Southwest, while the low country shrimp creole speaks to Dupar's southern roots.

For starters and small plates, there are a variety of interesting salads, a tasty chanterelle mushroom and spinach pie, white fish tacos and popovers, tomato soup and grilled white cheddar cheese sandwich.

Then there is a menu devoted solely to fire bread. This delicious chewy bread, served piping hot from the oven, can be eaten alone or used as a base for inventive sandwiches, salads and pizzas. You can get everything from tuna and white beans to beef Bolognese served on top of the bread.

In the libation department, there are an assortment of sassy cocktails and a killer wine list. And if you have room for dessert, an array of "sweet things" will definitely tempt your palate, from the sinfully rich caramelized banana and toasted coconut cream pie to the hot Mexican chocolate ancho chili tamale with warm vanilla bean sauce.

Everything at Pomegranate is made from scratch daily and presented with an eye towards attracting the senses. The food is a kaleidoscope of colors, flavors, spices and textures that combine to create a wildly wonderful smorgasbord of exciting tastes.

Pomegranate Bistro serves lunch and dinner, as well as brunch (weekends only).
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