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Superb steaks, inventive dishes and exemplary service @ Selanne Steak Tavern

Photos Courtesy Selanne Steak Tavern

By Jody Robinson

Here in South Orange County, we're pretty blessed to live so close to the coast and have an abundance of wonderful dining destinations to choose from. But for inventive cuisine and exemplary service in the spirit of much-loved classic American steakhouses and taverns, there are precious few establishments that rival Selanne Steak Tavern.

Situated along Pacific Coast Highway in Laguna Beach, the restaurant is housed in a historic 1934 two-story country cottage complete with a faux water well and bucket pouring water, red brick walkways and wooden shingled roof tiles. Step through the hand-carved wooden door into the main entry and you'll find that the interior ambiance and décor is decidedly classic modern - from the stunning glass chandelier suspended from the ceiling in the elegant foyer to the sleek Carrara marble fireplace, wide-planked oak floors, clean lines, upholstered furnishings and accented by local abstract art created by Laguna Beach artist Nick Gaetano throughout the classy bar and five dining areas (The Loft - upstairs dining room; The Wine Library; downstairs in The Tavern; or outside on The Veranda or Sunset Terrace).

Owned and operated Teemu Selanne, hockey legend and former NHL star player for the Anaheim Ducks, and local businessman Kevin Pratt. The long-time friends and neighbors, the pair share a commitment to making their restaurant a place for "friends and families to enjoy great food and libations in a comfortable, appealing eatery."

I would have to say the restaurant's proprietors have certainly hit the mark - and raised the bar for destination dining in the region. On a recent

date night, my husband, Tim, and I reserved a table in the upstairs dining room to indulge in a glass or two of fine wine (focused on California cult wines and other highly-rated, world class wines) and beautifully presented, delicious dishes including what are arguably among the best steaks in Orange County.

Executive Chef Joshua Severson has created a menu defined by his distinctive version of contemporary American steakhouse fare with a wonderful variety of top meats from Filet Mignon to Australian Wagyu. There are actually eight options on the menu, including the Chef's Signature 38 oz Lord Stanley Cut, which serves two.



Our server Mike recommended that we start with the chef's signature Pacific Diver Scallops, which he claimed were the best he'd ever eaten "with no other coming in a close second." Now I fancy myself somewhat of a seafood and sushi connoisseur and as such, was expecting it might fall short. But I have to say, Chef nailed it with a perfectly prepared dish en-

hanced by a delicious cauliflower/pickled chanterelle.

A meat-and-potatoes man, my husband chose the filet mignon and while I typically steer toward seafood selections, opted instead for a 12 oz prime Rib Eye - again at Mike's suggestion.

The marbling was superb, soft, and tender. Served with Chef's seasonal marrow butter and bordelaise sauce, the beef literally melted in our mouths. A favorite side dish is Selanne's signature Mac and Cheese - a decade five-cheese fondue topped with brioche crumbs.



The menu also features several other seafood dishes which include a 2 lb. Atlantic Maine Lobster and smoked Skuna Bay Salmon. For vegetarians, Selanne's serves up a Forest Mushroom Risotto flavored with black truffle oil. There is something delicious for everyone's taste.

Selanne Steak Tavern is located at 1464 S. Coast Hwy. in Laguna Beach. For reservations or more information, call (949) 715-9881 or visit selannesteaktavern.com

