



Culinary Corner

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REVIEW



Bobby Cochran/CW photos

Global's roasted pork chop, served with a beer sauce, mashed potatoes and braised red and white cabbage, is a perfect entrée for an evening out this fall.

Globally thinking

Short drive brings flavors from around the world

by Heidi Billotto
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In search of new and interesting restaurants, I often wander around newly constructed shopping centers and office parks, seeking those tenants with a culinary bent. Imagine my delight as I meandered through the Toringdon Office Park behind the Earth Fare supermarket off Johnston and North Community House roads in south Charlotte and happened upon Global Restaurant.

Open just four months now, Global already has people talking and they are saying good things; albeit, the first thing people talk about when mentioning Global is the location. Chef and owner Bernard Brunet and his wife, Shannon, could be considered front-runners in the Toringdon complex, filling a back corner in a mostly yet-to-be-occupied office building. But it won't be long before the buildings are filled. The route through the complex is well marked; signs posted at each turn will get you to Global in no time.

Global, a combination restaurant, bar and lounge, is small and chic. Charming black wrought-iron tables dressed with Mediterranean-blue napkins spot the patio outside. Interiors are modern yet warm and welcoming, dressed with rich Mediterranean blue and warm mustard-colored walls. Appointments suit the style with contrasting oversized, stark black chairs; linen tablecloths and napkins; distinctive square glass and china plates; copper-plated wall sculptures and contemporary lighting.

Even at first glance, the attention to detail is evident.

The love boat

Brunet is a Frenchman, born and raised in Nice. He met Shannon while working for Commodore Cruise Line – he was the chef, she a singer, dancer and social coordinator for guest services and functions. Together the two traveled the world. When the couple decided to settle in Charlotte, not far from Shannon's hometown of Boone, they had the idea to open a restaurant offering an array of intercontinental flavor.

While Brunet's background is French, the cuisine at Global is international. Appetizers, salads, soup and entrées are offered with flavors from around the world: India, Haiti, Japan, Greece, Italy, Spain, France and even North and South Carolina.

From among the list of starters, don't miss the shrimp "oooh la la," a delicious offering of tender flash-fried shrimp tossed in a sweet-and-sour papaya vinaigrette – a wonderful way to begin and one of my favorite dishes at Global. For another great start, try the Brie and pear quesadilla. This one sounded rather pedestrian to me at first, but we ordered it anyway. Presented in a martini glass, the combination of sweet pears with savory Brie was a delicious and unexpected surprise.

I also liked the flavor of the crab cakes. While the texture was not as crisp as I would have liked, the two good-sized cakes were served on a bed of wilted greens and topped with Brunet's creamy *beurre blanc*. This execution is typical of how Brunet takes dishes and flavors from all over the world and finishes them with a French flair.

GLOBAL RESTAURANT, BAR AND LOUNGE ★★★★ out of 5

Location: 3520 Toringdon Way; located in the Toringdon Office Complex behind Earth Fare on Johnston Road.

Phone: 704-248-0866; Fax: 704-644-0779

Price range: Lunch, \$7-\$11; dinner, \$16-\$26.

Hours: Monday through Friday, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 6-10 p.m.; Saturday, 6-10:30 p.m.; bar opens at 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Details: No smoking; in-season patio dining; take-out; separate lounge and bar; vegetarian items; occasional wine events; \$15 corkage fee; live entertainment Friday nights.

For more information: Visit www.global-restaurant.com.

Love crab, but not intrigued by the crab cakes? Go for the she-crab soup. Dressed tableside with just a drizzle of sherry, the broth here is rich, full and fabulous. It left me wanting more.

For a lighter start, I found two good ways to go. The endive salad is served with Danish blue cheese, pecans, tomatoes, chives and apple and an interesting almond vinaigrette. Also delightful is the smoked salmon timbale, which Brunet stuffs with feta cheese, cucumber, wild and white rice and a fresh herb dressing.

Although Global's dinner menu carries several pastas, including a squid ink risotto I am eager to try, so far I've been more tempted by other entrées. For my first dinner at Global, I ordered the braised lamb shank for my main course. The recipe hails from Brunet's homeland and he does it well. The shank is cooked until the flavorful meat falls off the bones. It's served atop orzo pasta with a laven-



The lunch menu at Global includes a mini sandwich, a cup of the soup du jour and a tasting-size serving of the entrée of the day.

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der-rosemary lamb sauce. Seasonal vegetables come on the side.

While tempted by the risotto at my second visit, I opted for the minty eggplant burrito. It was incredible – a dish I will most definitely order again. The burrito features a soft flour tortilla stuffed with spicy, tender baked eggplant, folded into a neat package and served with subtle cumin-spiked tomato sauce.

I thought the weakest link at Global was the seafood entrées, although I have chatted with many Global fans who disagree. While some swear by the tuna with orange pepper and a fresh pineapple-cilantro salsa, the red snapper drizzled with orange glaze or the mahi mahi topped with a watermelon-mint salsa, I found all three to have too many flavors on the plate, taking away from the taste of the fish itself. In all fairness, I have not tried the escolar, pan-seared and finished with a pink peppercorn and fresh basil sauce, so I'll have to get back to you on that one. I do find it appealing, though, that the Global menu has something for everyone.

Shannon's favorite is the pork chop, roasted in a beer sauce and served with mashed potatoes and braised red and white cabbage. While Brunet himself was hard-pressed to tell me his favorite dish, he did say that he enjoys the lamb tenderloin, seared and served with a spiced baked eggplant and drizzled with a cumin lamb

reduction. With flavors similar to my eggplant burrito, it sounds like a winner as well.

Final finishes

Whatever you eat at Global, save room for dessert. Beautifully presented, as was all the fare at Global, were creations such as a trio of mocha, vanilla and chocolate crème brûlée; strawberries and pineapple flambéed with Grand Marnier; a raspberry and lemon mousse layered on rounds of light pound cake; and a warm chocolate cake with a melted center and Swiss chocolate ganache topping – a fine way to finish. Global also offers a host of after-dinner drinks, cognacs and liqueurs as well as a full bar and well-priced wine list.

At Global, the dining room and adjacent bar and lounge are all no-smoking areas. Music is soft and fitting for the small space. On Friday nights, Global will host live entertainment in the lounge with Greg James on keyboards and Shannon on vocals.

In addition to serving dinner six nights a week and lunch during the weekdays, Global also hosts occasional special wine and beer events. At the upcoming beer tasting on Wednesday, Oct. 25, a variety of seasonal beers will be paired with samplings of Brunet's cuisine. The cost is \$15 per person and reservations are a must. For details, call the restaurant at 704-248-0866. □

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What's cookin'

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Ruth's Chris Steak House in Charlotte will be the site of an exclusive Brewmaster's dinner featuring Garrett Oliver of Brooklyn Beer on Wednesday, Oct. 25, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Ruth's Chris is located at 6000 Fairview Road in SouthPark. Oliver, the author of two books including "The Brewmaster's Table: Discovering the Pleasures of Real Beer with Real Food," worked with chef Justin Mendenhall on the beer and food pairings for the evening. Featured beers include the Brooklyn Weisse, Oktoberfest, Pilsner, Lager, Brown Ale, and Black Chocolate Stout. Cost for the dinner is \$75 per person. For more information and reservations, call Ruth's Chris at 704-556-1115 or visit www.RuthsChris.com.



The goal of Breast Cancer Awareness Month is to educate women about early breast cancer detection, diagnosis and treatment. Through October, Harris Teeter is helping to raise funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation and the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Harris Teeter will hold Pink Ribbon Produce, a fund-raiser that continues through Nov. 15. Eight produce suppli-

ers will give generously when shoppers purchase their products, which include Fresh Express packaged salads, Farmer's Market potatoes from Nature's Way, Dole Tropical Gold pineapple, cut fruit from Country Fresh, broccoli from Beachside Produce, tomatoes from Euro Fresh Farms, asparagus from Alpine Fresh and mini bananas from Chiquita.



Harper's Restaurants will feature a variety of dishes, \$9 to \$14, during their "shrimp feast." Louisiana Gulf shrimp are world famous for being sweet, firm and superior in appearance and taste. "We have a chance to help our friends, the shrimpers in the Gulf region, who have had a tough go of it lately," said Tom Sasser, president of Harper's Restaurant Group. "Not only have they had to deal with the ongoing devastation of Hurricane Katrina, but they have been struggling with the deflated shrimp industry caused by the dumping of cheaper, imported shrimp into our local markets."

"Shrimp Feast," which will continue through Nov. 30, will be available at any of the Harper's Restaurants in the Southeast. Reservations are not required. For more information, contact 704-375-9715.



Lulu in Plaza-Midwood, 1911 Central Ave., will now be open Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.; Sunday, brunch 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and dinner 5-9 p.m. Lulu will serve lunch Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. For information or reservations, call 704-376-2242.