

On the Money

By Diane Hudson
Portland Magazine

On the Marsh hits all the right notes for the holiday season!

This year-round four-star restaurant goes to even greater lengths during Kennebunkport's annual Christmas Prelude festivities. Offering an exquisite holiday menu surrounded by sparkling, breath-taking décor, the Prelude show at On the Marsh is not to be missed.

"Fine dining should be like theater," says owner Denise Rubin, who delights diners with surprises unfolding the moment the curtain rises.

The *Prologue's* Winter Bisque and Port Poached Pear and Saga Blue Cheese begin the culinary intrigue. The bisque, a heavenly mixture of apple, butternut squash, and lots of lobster, comes beautifully served in a fine German china tureen. The pears, ripe and symbolic, are superbly accompanied by the perfectly aged soft cheese. Add the adroit touch of St. Francis (Sonoma County) Cabernet Sauvignon and you have a rapt audience.

The *Performance* entrees heighten the senses with more whimsy, celebration, and sudden beauty. "There's enough in life to be taken seriously," Rubin says. "Leave it all at the front door here and be transported into another world."

The Filet Mignon and Sea Scallops and Lobster Risotto as performed by chef Jeff Savage deserve a standing ovation. The classic center-cut seared filet mignon—perfectly cooked, served with Bernaise sauce, terrific roasted Yukon gold potatoes, and sweet young asparagus—is butter-knife tender. The succulent pan-seared scallops pair well with the delicate, tasty lobster risotto and lobster jus. On the Marsh's signature dish, the Lobster Steak, also sparkles. Imagine two one-and-a-half pound lobster tails taken out of the shell and bound together atop wild rice with a beurre blanc sauce and fresh medley of vegetables surmounted by a finial of two bright red lobster claws, also removed from the shell.

Then there's the grilled Organic Black Pearl Salmon, or the Oven-fired Organic and antibiotic-free half Chicken served with dried cranberry wild rice, Madeira roasted chicken reduction, and seasonal vegetables. Then again, one might fancy the roasted Vegetable en crouete, with red wine reduction, warm spinach salad and mustard vinaigrette.

But wait! There's the *Epilogue*, a sprightly trip into unimaginable good dessert fare, featuring Dutch Apple Bolen, a delicious apple baked inside a tender pastry crust and served with caramel and vanilla bean ice cream. Call now; this show sells out quickly, though theme decorations are still on exhibit through February.