

Tradition

626 S. Federal Highway, Deerfield Beach, 954/480-6464

Written by LYNN KALBER

Tradition is tucked on the south end of the tiny Deerfield Square strip mall. Small, with only 11 tables inside, a few at the bar and a couple of tables outside, the place is almost filled by 7:30 on a Saturday night. Groups of four or six arrive smiling and laughing, and there is bantering among the tables that suggests these are loyals back for a French food fix.

Owners Eric and Anais Heintz have filled their intimate shop with traditions of their own, as well as traditional dishes on the menu. They open the door for all who enter, a welcoming gesture that says a lot.

They serve an *amuse-bouche*, compliments of the house, and you don't see that done on a regular basis. This night, it's a soothing cream of vegetable soup with carrots, tomatoes and "whatever else the chef has on hand. It's different every day," says our server with a grin. As it should be. This tiny, square-shaped dish of soup is similar to an exotic cream of tomato, but richer. It's also the soup of the day.

Caesar salad has anchovy-based dressing; the dressing is creamy, too, and the light bite of anchovies makes this a winner. The PEI mussels marinière has big, fat mollusks, and you can taste the brine of the sea in them. The broth is soothing and substantial but not thick; it's good for whatever ails you. The rest of the warm French bread goes into this.

The bread is made in-house, as is everything else. Open since February 2017, it's a restaurant full of passion, and Eric is the seventh generation carrying on his Alsace family's passion for serving food. The passion comes through in the



calf's liver with caramelized onions and bacon. Beautifully seared, it's slightly sweet, and that's magnified with the onions. The richness of the tender liver hits your palate a few moments after each bite. This is a local product, like most everything on the menu. I confess to eating liver dishes all over the world, and this is one of the best I've ever had.

The time and effort put into each dish is apparent. The coq au vin is simmered for two days. The Grand Marnier soufflé takes 18 minutes to make; I'd wait an hour if I had to. This soufflé should come with netting,

because it's lighter than air and threatens to take off like a hot air balloon. It melts in my mouth. The table next to me asks to have a look at it, and they've just sat down. But they're drooling anyway; already the "what can I eat and still have room for that?"

maneuvering begins.

I'm already planning to go back and have my palate pampered again. *Mais oui!*



Clockwise from above: PEI mussels marinière, yellowtail snapper rataouille, escargot and Alsatian apple tart



IF YOU GO

PARKING: Parking lot

HOURS: 5-10 p.m., Mon.-Sat.

PRICES: \$17-\$34

WEBSITE: tradition-restaurant.com