

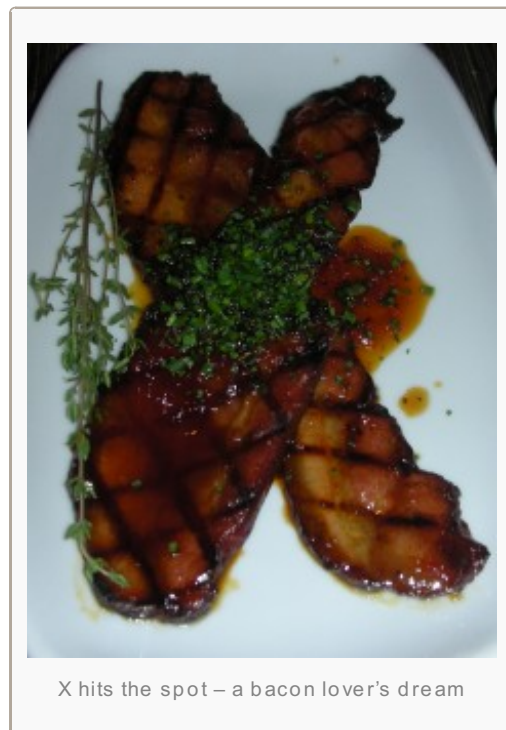
Leafs Five Habs One E11even Ten out of Ten

Woohoo! We certainly picked the right night for our one and only visit to a Leafs game this season. The team was on fire with four goals in a dazzling and dramatic first period while James Reimer handled just about everything the Habs could pour onto him. Up in the reds, my wife and I were hoarse with screaming. Prior to the game we had a most satisfactory dinner at E11even, MLSE's clever, comfortable, discreetly sophisticated restaurant. The company's Director of Culinary, chef Robert Bartley's menu hasn't changed much in the three years it's been open – which only shows they got the formula right from the outset. Graham Pelley is the restaurant executive chef, having worked his way up from sous, and he too was firing on all cylinders last night.



In a previous review of the place, I had found fault with the crab cake's consistency so it may or may not have been a coincidence that he sent one out as an appetizer. It was pretty much flawless last night, moist but not at all gummy and packed with big chunks of crab meat under a well-judged creamy slaw. He also decided we needed to taste the house signature bacon starter – two enormous, thickly sliced rashers of bacon, cross-charred from the grill and smothered in a maple syrup sauce with finely chopped chives and thyme. The combination of sweetness and the flavour of the grill worked beautifully together – such a simple but effective slap shot to the pleasure net.

Wendy had the lobster cobb salad as a main course – a huge bowl of yummy ingredients featuring more bacon, egg, diced avocado, romaine and radicchio, cherry tomatoes and a generous amount of lightly poached lobster – and it should be generous at \$34 a pop. They toss it with a tangy blue cheese dressing and while lobster and blue cheese isn't the first thing that springs to mind when you think of collaborative gustatory epiphanies it actually works very well. Sommelier Jonathan MacCalder picked a good Chablis as accompaniment and everything was happy on that side of the table.



X hits the spot – a bacon lover's dream

On my side, too. The fish of the day was miso-glazed black cod, a dish that matched the retro mood of most of the menu. Chef Pelley executed it most delicately, just slipping the fish into wood smoke for four minutes to give it a whisper of the forest before roasting it off very quickly in a hot oven. It was impeccable – moist and flaky with the miso glaze very subtly achieved, just a light gilding on the surface of the fish. Again the accompaniments were simple but delicious – a great many golden chanterelles from the west coast and a purée of creamed corn that was as smooth as bechamel. We finished by sharing a sticky toffee pudding – definitely one of the best I've ever had – right up there with the version I once rhapsodized about at Ravine winery in Niagara. That one was made by Ravine's pastry cook, Amy Pelley, who is Graham Pelley's wife and he managed to persuade her to part with the recipe, much to E11even's benefit. Crowned with vanilla ice cream, the steamed pudding was light and fluffy but imbued with a sense of butter. And then that delightful game! If the Leafs and the Habs do meet in the first round of the playoffs, we could be in for more treats.



miso-glazed black cod with chanterelles and creamed corn