

Bonefish lures patrons with 'polished casual'

BY JOHN KEENAN

WORLD-HERALD
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The new Bonefish Grill at Regency is a polished place, all gleaming hardwood floors and dark cherry chairs.



Grilled ahi tuna steaks are **one of the fresh fish cuts available at the Bonefish Grill in Regency.**

sauce and basil, served in an attractive, steaming heap. Tuna sashimi, Cajun chicken egg rolls and coconut-crusting shrimp also are available.

But don't miss the bang bang shrimp (\$7.90), the restaurant's signature appetizer. It's crunchy, tender gulf shrimp in a creamy, spicy sauce, a sort of chile aioli. The shrimp were piled so high on a bowl of lettuce that when they were served, one slid off and skittered across the paper tablecloth.

Anybody remember the chorus to "On Top of Spaghetti"?

With the thick sauce and the heaping pile of shrimp, the appetizer was quite substantial. The aioli's mild-to-medium spiciness woke up my taste buds, getting them ready for the following courses.

Our second appetizer was the four bacon-wrapped sea scallops (\$9.70). The dish mixed the mildly fishy taste and slightly gritty texture of the scallops with a smoky bacon flavor. They were served around a cold scoop of chutney, including mango salsa, charred red onion, fresh red bell peppers and a sweet Thai chili sauce.

The soup with the meal was a corn chowder with visible chunks of crabmeat - a thick, slightly salty cream soup with a flour roux (or "slurry") for richness. We also had the restaurant's thick, crunchy-crusting Tuscan bread with a seasoned basil-parmesan-olive pesto in olive oil.

It took a while to get our entrees. The waiter popped in at one point to tell me my meal had gone to another table, explaining the wait.

My Atlantic swordfish steak (\$17.20 for about 9 ounces) was cooked on a wood-burning grill (oak, apple and hickory specifically - you can taste a tiny hint in the fish).

It was served with a white-wine-lemon-juice reduction, seasoned and thickened with cream and butter. (Grilled fish possibilities include salmon, trout, tilapia, mahi mahi, sea scallops with gulf shrimp, grouper, ahi tuna, Chilean sea bass and twin lobster tails. The sauces include the lemon butter, lime tomato garlic, mango salsa or a pan Asian sauce.) It was served with a side of angel-hair pasta in a mild marinara sauce.

Lily's Chicken (\$13.90), one of the restaurant's grilled specialties, is an 8-ounce fire-roasted breast topped with goat cheese, spinach, artichokes and a lemon basil sauce. The chicken is marinated in a mix of seasonings, resulting in a juicy mouthful, particularly with the tart cheese.

Other grilled specialties include chicken marsala, sirloin steak and filet mignon.

There were a few children at the restaurant during our Sunday night visit, and the children's menus were activity books that come with crayons. My kids had spaghetti (\$4.99), which included two lightly seasoned meatballs, and macaroni and cheese (\$4.99).

That's by design - the restaurant calls itself a "polished casual" establishment, featuring elements of fine dining and an emphasis on value.

Contemporary jazz plays over the speakers, and real greenery is found throughout. The tables, white vinyl with white paper on top, are stocked with olive oil, mixed peppercorns and sea salt. You dine by candlelight.

The restaurant features such specialties as Fontina cheese pork chops and diablo shrimp fettuccine.

It also grills a mean cut of fish.

The menu is a mix. To open, it features soups, salads and eclectic starters, such as the mussels Josephine, sautéed with tomatoes, garlic, lemon wine

Bonefish Grill

Where: 120 Regency Parkway

Hours: 4 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 4 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sundays

Prices: Appetizers \$5.50 to \$14.90; entrees \$12.90 to \$26

Alcohol: Full bar, martini menu, wine list and specialty cocktails

Payment: Credit cards, no personal checks

Wheelchair accessible: Yes

Information: 391-3474; reservations accepted

Extras

The restaurant features a martini menu that includes such variations as the Cosmopolitan, a vodka-infused pomegranate martini, and the HpnotiQ Breeze martini (featuring a glow-stick stirrer).

This is Omaha's first Bonefish Grill. Other restaurants are in Leawood and Wichita, Kan., and Kansas City, Mo.

The restaurant's fresh fish is hand-cut daily in-house.

Bonefish Grill makes all its desserts on the premises. The short dessert list includes a chocolate macadamia nut brownie cake, a deep-dish key lime pie and crème brulee. There's also a "nightly special" dessert - the night we were in, it was Bananas Foster.

The entire meal, not including tip, was \$75.31.

Bonefish Grill is a nice fit for the Regency. The staff is knowledgeable and quick, and the seafood is fine.

In fact, the bang bang shrimp packed enough punch to send me back to the restaurant.

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