

III Forks steakhouse in Gardens a breed apart from competitors

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Tuesday, September 04, 2007

The newest steakhouse on the block is **III Forks**, from Dallas, at the Midtown center in Palm Beach Gardens.

The meatery is the first outside of its native Texas. One of the partners in it, Bill Watson, explained how his corporation, Consolidated Restaurants, chose the location.

"The area found us," he said. "Very dear friends of ours who are residents of Palm Beach Gardens pointed it out to us as being a promising location.

"We fell in love with the Gardens area and especially, PGA Boulevard. The love blossomed quickly and we took the space."

He's also behind **Cantina Laredo**, the steakhouse's next-door neighbor at Midtown, one of the Mexican restaurant brands he owns.

III Forks was 2 1/2 years in the making, he said. Delays were due to site preparation and initial construction, but the steakhouse finally opened two weeks ago.

What differentiates them among steakhouses?

"First and foremost, it's all about the steak and service. We are truly an exclusive USDA prime beef restaurant, and I'll show you our invoices to prove it.

"You probably know USDA prime is the top 2 percent of all beef produced in the U.S. Add our standards, and we're getting the top one-half percent of that," he said. "We look for breed - mostly Angus - from the Great Plains, grain fed, and we finish it with a wet-aging."

Other standouts on the menu, he claims, are the III Forks salad, made with Granny Smith apples and a walnut oil vinaigrette with blue cheese crumbles, a seafood medley appetizer, and the house-made high-butterfat ice cream.

"We have a 'swarming' service style. Your entrees are delivered, sizzling on a plate, by the first server. The second server will offer beefsteak tomatoes and spring onions. The third server following those will have warm beef gravy for your duchess mashed potatoes - or your steak - or both if you prefer."

But the biggest difference may be a "full-plate presentation" - doing away with the a la carte menu common elsewhere. "We don't nickel-and-dime you for vegetables or potatoes," he said.

"You could certainly walk in and be satisfied with a steak dinner for \$40, which includes potatoes, vegetables, tomatoes and onions. With wine, I'm going to say to that per person the check will average around \$79 to \$80 per person - but that's a complete meal."

There's a list of seafood on the menu as well.

They're planning a second Ill Forks in Boca, but as yet, the ink hasn't yet dried on the lease, he said. It will be near the Mizner Plaza. >**Ill Forks**

4645 PGA Blvd., Palm Beach Gardens (Midtown)

(561) 630-3660; www.3forks.com

Open Sunday-Thursday, 5-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, till 11 p.m.


Coming soon:Chix on the Block, set to open Oct. 1, is a new all-organic rotisserie chicken spot serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. It's the brainchild of Dany Thibault, owner of Boulevard Catering. He'll serve and cater from the new place on South Dixie Highway in West Palm Beach. He'll have organic turkeys for Thanksgiving, too, he says. ...

Food fests plans set:The Four Seasons Palm Beach announced its lineup of chefs and programs for its annual **Wine and Food Classic** Nov. 2-4. Special guest chef is Gunter Seeger of Atlanta. For more info call (561) 582-2800, Ext. 8010. ...

The **12th annual Epcot International Wine and Food Festival** at Disney World is set for Sept. 28-Nov. 11; go to www.disneyworld.com/food.com for the schedule and information.

A note of sympathy goes out to Joe Turner, "Tahiti Joe" - a food friend to many in

our area with his award-winning line of Tahiti Joe hot sauces. His wife, Charlotte, partner in the business, passed away last month.



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