



## RESTAURANT REVIEWS

**12/01/06**

(512) 474-1776  
111 Lavaca St.

**III Forks**

Mon – Thu: 5pm – 10pm  
Fri – Sat : 5pm – 11pm  
Sun: Closed

Three Forks is a steak and seafood emporium for grownups. At Cesar Chavez and Lavaca, it's an excellent addition to the growing downtown area. First opened in Dallas in 1998, III Forks takes its name from an old trading post built in early north central Texas where the modern city of Dallas now stands. The proprietor of the trading post, a Captain Bob Cooper, was a contemporary of Sam Houston and was known far and wide as a man who knew his way around a steak.

Well, some things don't change much. The Austin III Forks has just opened and like the Dallas store, they are serving USDA prime and only USDA prime steaks that would have made Captain Bob very proud. The restaurant's various dining rooms are named for various Texas heroes and each room has its own appeal and character.

I attended the soft opening of III Forks at the end of October. This is where they test the menu, put the servers through their paces, and work out the kinks common to all new restaurants. I had to send my NY Strip back for more cooking a few times but those pre-opening night glitches are expected. One thing you can't fake however is quality. And it was apparent, even on that chaotic night that steaks and the seafood were of the highest quality.

Several weeks later, fine-tuning accomplished, we returned and had a sumptuous meal. I had the Scallops Wrapped in Bacon served in a lovely meuniere sauce. The scallops were plump and perfect.

The Beef Croustades were amazing. The tenderloin is pounded and seared until caramelized; then served on garlic toast points with a mustard aioli.

The Crabcakes were zesty yet fulsome at the same time. Lots of flavor from the celery seeds, paprika, thyme, and cayenne. And most importantly, lots of lovely lump crab meat.

We tried the Dover Sole in a delicate beurre blanc sauce and it was nothing short of lyrical. The fish had a beautiful texture.

The Chilean Sea Bass was engaging in its simplicity. Simply seared with salt and pepper and a modified pesto: very light resembling a basil and garlic oil.

Then we got to the III Forks calling card: the steaks. There is nothing quite like a properly aged and well-cooked steak. My Bone-In Ribeye, done just north of medium rare and beautifully marbled was literally bursting with flavor. Each bite, lovingly contemplated, led to joyous anticipation of the tastes of the next. That's what eating a great steak provides for the patron. And the NY Strip was equally up to the challenge. Fine tastes prevailed as we devoured both. They also serve up (casual observation of the party adjacent to us) what looked to be smashing Porterhouse and a Pepper Steak. Alas, that shall have to wait till our next visit.

The sides were as tasty as the steaks. I had an initial problem with the sautéed mushrooms on the first visit that was not all apparent on the next. The mushrooms were wonderful. As was the fresh asparagus and the corn casserole.

III Forks is the type of restaurant that will inherently attract business diners. It's comfortably appointed; the servers really get the art of serving, and the overall ambience, as earlier noted, is, well, for grownups. If I were taking out of town clients to dinner, I would not hesitate to bring them to III Forks.

<http://www.diningoutwithrobbalon.com/review/IIIforks/index.html>