

The
IMPROPER METROPOLITANIAN

November 25–December 8, 2015

*EVERYTHING
but the BIRD
Fresh spins
on classic
sides*

*DECK
the HALLS!
DIY party
projects
from
the pros*

*The HOLIDAY
ENTERTAINING
ISSUE*

METRO BOSTON'S CLUED-IN
GUIDE TO ENTERTAINMENT, CULTURE
and PRIME-TIME PROCEDURALS

Digging
deep
with
Emily
Deschanel

ANew LOOK FOR
The Nutcracker

NEW DISH IN TOWN:
Plates like the lamb pita, grilled octopus and pumpkin hummus are as enticing as the vibe.



MC's Picks

Pumpkin hummus
Kale and orzo salad
Grilled octopus
Lamb sausage pita
Beef matambre

from teensy to titanic. On the small side, pumpkin hummus (\$9) with pomegranate, Parmesan and smoked pepitas offers a pretty plate with lovely contrasting flavors and textures. Baked oysters "Savannah" (\$12) tops two oysters with a creamy gratin of lobster and mushrooms: rich and delectable, but gone in an instant. Provoleta (\$10) likewise feels tiny, a little skillet of baked cheese with a dollop of chimichurri for spreading on grilled bread. Kentucky "prosciutto" toast (\$12) is topped with excellently smoky/salty country ham, but is another expensive couple of bites.

Larger plates feel like better values. Chicken and quinoa meatballs (\$14) feature a crunchy coating and a sweet/savory/tangy glaze, fabulous one night but oversalted on another. The kitchen consistently hits its vividly composed, crunchily accented vegetarian options out of the park, as in seared king trumpet mushrooms (\$14) with sumac yoghurt and crisp cauliflower; seared halloumi cheese (\$13) with charred eggplant, fried chickpeas and honey; kale and orzo salad (\$12) with roasted Brussels sprouts, grilled radicchio, burnt raisins and sunflower seeds; and corn and farro salad (\$12) with arugula, smoked blue cheese, pickled peaches and pistachios. "Tico" tuna crudo (\$17) makes the currently common mistake of overwhelming its raw fish with too many adornments, but the superb grilled octopus (\$18) makes for a meaty composed salad of gigante beans, fennel, grapefruit and punchy smoked harissa.

Medium-crust flatbread pizzas (described as pitas) are another value. The lamb sausage pita (\$16) with spicy tomato sauce, zucchini, harissa-fennel pickles, yoghurt and feta is terrific, though a similar pile-up of ingredients on the K.F.C. pita (\$15) undermines the key virtue of its Korean-style fried chicken, turning its ultra-crisp skin soggy.

The most dramatic dishes are meant for sharing among several friends, as in the beautiful family-style rolled flank roast that is grilled beef matambre (\$95), stuffed with red chile, salami and provolone, sliced and nestled atop Parmesan polenta, drizzled with a rich gravy and brightened with a side of chimichurri. Another head-turner is the grilled "viper" chop (\$95), a luscious dish of slow-cooked pork short ribs on kimchee fried rice, with a fiery gochuchang-based sauce and flecks of fried shallots and sesame seeds. Save room for Kate Holowchik's witty, fun desserts, like doughnuts (\$9) with dollops of blood orange curd and a side of coconut-miso ice cream, or an oversized macaron ice cream sandwich (\$4) with PB&J ice cream.

Given the early mob scenes, there's evident demand for Yvonne's glamorous melange of olde and new. The great cocktails and mostly delicious food in those incredible rooms can be intoxicating. The only needle scratch on a typically giddy, clamorous evening here may come with the check: Those costly little plates can quickly mount up, while a "kitchen appreciation" surcharge adds another 3 percent to the food tab. Yvonne's is a ton of noisy fun, maybe the most seductive It Girl to hit Boston in a long while, but hanging out with her ain't cheap. ♦

Yvonne's, 2 Winter Place, Boston (617-267-0047)
yvonnesboston.com Hours: Bar, 4 pm-2 am daily;
kitchen, 5-11 pm Reservations: Yes Parking: Validated
parking from nearby garage Liquor: Full bar

Dining / MC Slim JB

SEX ON A PLATTER

YVONNE'S BRINGS CHEEKY, MODERN GLAMOUR TO A STORIED DOWNTOWN LOCATION.

WHEN OLD-MONEY DINING institution Locke-Ober closed in 2012, it marked the end of several eras: the sunset of jackets-required dining in Boston, another bridge to Camelot gone, one less Boston restaurant with 19th-century roots. The ancient temple to Brahmin manners, silver-salver service and fusty Continental cuisine had become obsolete. But as budding skyscrapers now creep upward all across downtown, new owners have transformed the late grande dame into hot debutante Yvonne's, and she's already Boston's Miss Thing: boisterous, flamboyant, chic and sexy as hell.

One enters the self-styled "supper club" via a tiny outer foyer where the doorperson phones inside to see if you can be admitted, then ushers you to an inner host stand. This feels like sensible crowd control when the place is packed, but silly velvet-rope kabuki when it's emptier. But the rooms—a larger bar/dining room, another smaller, library-themed fireplace-equipped one, and a cozy connecting lounge—are stunning, a crazy-quilt fusion of Locke-Ober's handsome Victorian mahogany fixtures and florid new accents: flocked wallpaper here, glowing pressed-tin ceilings there, crystal chandeliers, marble-topped bars, plush upholstered

banquettes. The space softens its envious nostalgia for hoary Beacon Hill luxury with cheeky, modern irony. Locke-Ober's famous oil painting, *Mlle. Yvonne*, a classical nude hoisting a chalice, is burlesqued here as a naked babe taking a brazen selfie.

Under the management of Will Thompson (ex-Drink), those gorgeous bars are staffed with well-trained craft bartenders pouring beautifully presented drinks, like the Ladder District (\$12) of rye, Calvados, cinnamon and bitters with a giant ice cube, and the bubbly Miner's Club (\$10) of Benedictine, gin, lime, sweet spices and pear cider. If those seem too sophisticated, there are fruity, giant-format cocktails for sharing with several friends, like the Standard Punch of rye, raspberry, lemon, oolong, sage and soda (\$95). Careful: These may be elegant updates on Scorpion Bowls, but they're still potent. The beer list boasts a tight 15 options (\$5-\$9) tilting to crowd-pleasing refreshment, though more flavorful exceptions like St.-Feuillien saison (\$8) can be found. Nineteen wines by the glass (\$11-\$24) and 120 in bottles (\$36-\$600, mostly under \$100) neatly span Old and New Worlds at reasonably fair prices. Given Yvonne's nightclub-like trappings, this is a surprisingly serious, grownup beverage program.

Chefs Tom Berry and Juan Pedrosa have assembled an eclectic menu with a spectrum of plates

marlo