

LEVEROCK'S 7092 Placida Road in Cape Haze



Every month we have a page of advertising titled Staff Favorite Restaurants. It says "Where we go when we're hungry". Some cynics probably think this is hype and we'll take an ad from anyone. Not true. All the advertisers are places that one or more of the staff members frequent on a regular basis. In the interest of keeping things current I have made the sacrifice and am visiting them to assure myself and our readers that all our "Favorites" are keeping their quality up and that we can still highly recommend them. This month I'll review recent meals at Leverocks and Café de la Bay.

Leverock's at 7092 Placida Road in Cape Haze is first on the list. Four of us went for a Sunday night dinner and the first good sign was a parking lot worse than the Placida boat ramp in tarpon season. I was a gentleman and dropped my friends at the door and went to find a spot.

When I joined them inside I was very glad I'd made reservations with the manager, Kevin Rose. Kevin is doing a great job of continuing the excellent traditions of this long time local spot. Walk ins were being told of a ½ hour or more wait. There were seats at the cozy, well stocked bar so a wait wouldn't have been tough duty but I was hungry and the smells coming out of the kitchen weren't helping.

We were quickly greeted by our server Christine and she got the drink orders going and put in for a dozen oysters, some clam chowder and onion rings. I am spoiled by fresh Bull Bay oysters, but these measured up nicely and if the horseradish wasn't freshly ground that day I'd be shocked. Nice sized and plump, the oysters were gone so

fast we talked about another round but the rings and chowder arrived and we had better things to do than talk.

Leverock's is famous for their New England style chowder; it was my first shot at it. I won't ever skip it. Incredible balance of tender clams, potatoes and just the right amount of onion in a unworldly

liquid. It is worth a trip just for the chowder.

I am usually a man of simple preparation when it comes to fish. A nice fillet lightly breaded and sautéed in butter is my idea of heaven on a plate. For the sake of this review I ordered Dijon crusted Mahi; lightly coated with Dijon mustard and grated parmesan, given a short pass under the broiler and served with steamed veggies. This is a wicked good Mahi prep as the fish was cooked just enough, the coating got a tasty crust and the veggies had to have been steamed to order as they were cooked with a slight crunch to them. These guys had not done time on a steam table.

My companions had the Classic Combo, Grouper Almandine and Pasta Useppa. These were all well presented and carefully prepared using primarily fresh local seafood. Everyone said their meals were great, and from the small bites we shared I would have to agree.

Leverock's is the perfect place for a special meal, but too good to save it for special occasions only. They have a great happy hour and sunset menu for a weekday treat. When the weather warms up, take the time to go down after work, sit on the deck and remember why you moved to Florida; beautiful weather, great seafood, good friends and a drink at sunset.

John Radkins is Co-Publisher of Coastal Angler Magazine, a graduate of the Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago and a 54 year old guy who better stop eating like this. For more hours and contact information on these restaurants please turn to page 23.