

PrimeSpotsPhiladelphia



January/February, 2013

The Restaurant Report

by Bob Bickell



Lacroix at the Rittenhouse; Bookbinders; the Top Fifty; Fork; and some Healthy Dining.

Lacroix at the Rittenhouse



A vital part of the Philadelphia restaurant scene is our classic fine-dining establishments (such as Vetri; Fountain at the Four Seasons; Le Bec-fin; and Lacroix at the Rittenhouse. If the City is in the category of “A Great Restaurant Destination”, this is the kind of quality that has to be there.

Try any one of the above, and you are guaranteed to enjoy an amazing restaurant experience. While there are some notable differences, the one absolute is that they all have extremely talented chefs, and Chef Jon Cichon is certainly one of them.

next:

Chef Jon Cichon...



A young and talented Philadelphia guy and a graduate of The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College.

I have always appreciated the career of Chef Jean Marie Lacroix and it's an appropriate name for the restaurant he started back in 2003 located in the famous Rittenhouse Square as part of one of the great hotels in America. I see him in the same class as someone like Dick Vermeil. They both have "Philadelphia" written all over them, and they both did great things for the City.

Of course, Jean Marie has moved on, and this restaurant has seen a number of chefs over the ensuing years. Some might say too many chefs, but the one steady force (since 2005) has been Chef Jon Cichon who was fortunate to have learned from so many talented (and very successful chefs).

Having spent some time with Jon (and also time with their talented General Manager in Sylvain Briens), one has to see an extremely favorable future for this classic spot.

These guys know what it's all about, and I predict that Chef Cichon will be the man in the Lacroix kitchen for years to come. The stability will be a major factor in the continuing success story this restaurant.

next:

A (typical) recent review from **Trip Advisor...**

“This is by FAR the best restaurant in Philadelphia. In NY we like Per Se, EMP, and Jean Georges. If you like those places, then you'll like Chef Jon Cichon and the entire team at Lacroix. Best front of house team in Philadelphia as well, and the best Sunday brunch in Philadelphia.”

From **Philadelphia Style Magazine...**

Table Service

Executive Chef Jon Cichon is the star of the culinary show at Lacroix at the Rittenhouse's chef's table, situated in the heart of this famed kitchen. His custom 14- to 18-course meals are imaginative and seasonally appropriate; a star entrée is the kombu cured fluke tartare with honeydew, wasabi, white chocolate powder and celery sorbet. The table is available for dinner Monday through Thursday nights, and diners may opt for wine pairings from a collection of 550 bottles.”

The accolades go on and on, and at the end of the day; we see the emergence of yet another great chef in Philadelphia.

next:

I would like to see more collaborative dinners with the chefs of Philadelphia. It is interesting by definition, and it's a positive concept in terms of promoting this City as a top restaurant destination.

It's no surprise that Chef Cichon has joined forces with three other superb chefs from Philadelphia doing a set of four dinners at each other's restaurant. The participants include Chef Lee Styer (Fond), Nicholas Elmi (the Rittenhouse Tavern), and Chef Christopher Kearse (Will BYOB).

It is interesting to note that the Rittenhouse Hotel was recently taken over by new owners. That had the potential to be a problem in terms of the restaurant, but all these people did was quietly make things better. They knew what they had in Chef Cichon, and they added Sylvain Briens as the GM. It's not confusing; the restaurants that have an outstanding chef, and an equally outstanding general manager tend to enjoy great success in this volatile business.

Such is the case at the Rittenhouse Hotel. It's a beautiful thing!

www.lacroixrestaurant.com