

CUISINE NEWS

Gulf View Grill presents great view and much more

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A dining experience at the Gulf View Grill is enhanced by its world-class view of the Gulf of Mexico. We took the elevator to the second floor and were rewarded with the expansive sight of Englewood's glittering aqua blue waters.

The Elmore family has been serving the community with its Gulf View Grill for more than 25 years. Owner Margie Elmore greeted us. Her son, David, is the chef. The other Elmore son, Mike, is the restaurant's general manager.

Though it was a sweltering day, we couldn't resist having a cocktail on the outdoor deck, which opens at 4 p.m. The extensive drink menu features specialty cocktails, including the Bushwacker and Bahama Mama. The drink menu also offers more than 14 martini selections and plenty of beer and wine choices.

I ordered the Key lime pie martini (\$6.95) an exotic cocktail of Licor 43, Stolli vodka, Midori, cream and fresh lime juice, served straight up in a graham cracker-rimmed and chilled martini glass. The frothy tropical green martini looked and tasted as deliciously complex as the ingredient indicate. My companion had a glass of pinot grigio (\$5.95), but couldn't resist taking a sip of the green martini.

I was torn between the smoked salmon and artichoke bisque and the she-crab soup (\$5). I chose the soup, and was glad I did. Every bite was loaded with lumps of sweet crab, and a touch of sherry gave dimension to its creamy richness. The Gulf View creates soup stock from scratch every day.

We shared a shrimp cocktail martini (\$12), served on the rocks in a chilled martini glass with cocktail sauce and topped with an olive. The cool dish of four perfectly cooked, enormous fresh shrimp could have been a meal in itself.

The Gulf View offers colorful views of beach umbrellas, people splashing in the gulf and bronzed sun-worshippers. As we took in the scene, sunny skies gave way to the summer's looming storm clouds. Ms. Elmore's husband, Keyes, came to the rescue with remote in hand. With the push of a button — men and their remotes — a protective awning was extended over our heads.

Alas, high winds and pounding rain would ultimately force us indoors.

We resumed our dining at a cozy window table and took in a completely different gulf view, complete with thunder, lightning and tree-bending winds.

"Great thing about dining at the View," said our waitress, Beth, "is that it's never the same, but always spectacular." Beth has been an employee of the Gulf View Grill for more than 10 years.

After exploring the Gulf View's vast menu, I inquired about the prime rib, which is available on Friday and Saturday only. Since it's a house specialty, it was an easy choice. Herb crusted, the meat is slow roasted with bone in and served boneless. Sides include a salad, choice of starch and fresh steamed veg-



etables. I ordered the 16-ounce King Cut (\$22) with garlic mashed potatoes. My companion, nearly sated with the soup and shrimp cocktail, ordered the crab cake appetizer (\$11).

The wine list had a nice selection of reds and whites by the glass (\$6.95) and full bottles. We selected a bottle of Gnarly Head old red vine Zinfandel, reasonably priced at \$22. Deep ruby in color, its pleasant fragrance and medium-to-full-body was delightful.

The Chesapeake crab cakes — a departure from local blue crab — were generously packed with lump crabmeat and well seasoned. The crab cakes' mixed greens and sweet tomato enhanced the decadent dish. We agreed they were some of the best crab cakes we'd ever tasted, and bemoaned not ordering it as an entrée.

The dinner salad of mixed spring greens, carrots, radishes, cucumbers, red onions and crunchy croutons was served with house made bleu cheese dressing and hot-out-of-the-oven baguette. The well-trimmed prime rib arrived just as ordered — medium-rare with a side of fresh horseradish sauce. The prime rib is a Gulf View favorite, and now I know why: It was tender, juicy and full

of flavor: beef cooked to perfection. The crispy, herb crust provided a great accent to the meat.

Mr. Elmore stopped by to check on our meals after taking a look at the weather forecast, predicting a beautiful sunset. As we finished our entrées, the summer storm had passed, and the skies were blue again, accented by billowing cumulus clouds. The Gulf View Grill's infamous sunsets would not disappoint that evening, so we decided to return to the outside deck for a dessert of Rockside Brownie, a warm homemade gooey amalgamation of chocolate, caramel and pecan, topped with vanilla bean ice cream, whipped cream and a cherry. We like every chocolate dessert, but the Rockside Brownie truly rocked.

The staff at the Gulf View Grill is down to earth, friendly and helpful. Our waitress was warm, knowledgeable and professional.

As we headed out, our hosts suggested we stay for the night's full moon. The sunset sky was a gloriously glowing red, pink and gold. Beach goers returned to celebrate the day's end.

As we finished our coffee, we agreed that our meal the Gulf View Grill was one of the best we'd ever had. ■

ROGER DICKINSON / FLORIDA WEEKLY

Top left: Shrimp cocktail martini appetizer features four enormous fresh shrimp cooked to perfection.

Above: Well-seasoned crab cakes packed with lump crabmeat make a great appetizer or entrée at the Gulf View Grill.

Left: Succulent herb-crusted boneless prime rib meat is slow roasted with bone-in and served boneless.

in the know

The Gulf View Grill

2095 N. Beach Road, Englewood,
475-3500

Ratings:

Food: ★★★★★ ½

Service: ★★★★★ ½

Atmosphere: ★★★★★

>> **Hours:** Open 11 a.m. to closing Monday through Sunday

>> **Reservations:** Accepted

>> **Credit cards:** Major cards accepted

>> **Price range:** Appetizers: \$6-\$12; entrees: \$12-\$30

>> **Beverages:** Full bar

>> **Seating:** conventional dining room tables and chairs, outside deck stools/tables

>> **Specialties of the house:** imported Chilean sea bass, herb roasted prime rib, local seafood, coconut shrimp, bouillabaisse, chicken Oscar and homemade soups

>> **Volume:** Moderate

>> **Parking:** Free lot on site

>> **Website:** www.thegulfviewgrill.com

★★★★★ **Superb**
★★★★ **Noteworthy**
★★★ **Good**
★★ **Fair**
★ **Poor**

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