

Uptown Downtown

Caprice Cafe in downtown Redlands serves upscale dishes with a touch of class.

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After more than a quarter century, Caprice Cafe continues to elevate the dining experience on Redlands' downtown State Street with its upscale rendition of California-Mediterranean cuisine.

The original owners sold the restaurant three years ago to manager Chris Pepino, who has upheld its tradition of excellence while adding his own touches to the menu and decor. The kitchen staff remains much the same, with original chef Leila Ayoub consulting on menu items. Head chef Rebecca Lopez has been with Caprice since 2008.

A wine cellar of more than 170 bottles has

earned the restaurant a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence. The Mediterranean-inspired menu includes fresh fish, which is flown in daily. Sausages and flatbreads are made on premises, along with all sauces and dressings. Plating is colorful and renders each dish a small work of art.

For starters, the Wild Salmon Carpaccio tantalizes with flavors of raw Loch Duarte Scottish salmon, dabs of yuzu tobiko caviar, chives, avocado slices and micro greens, topped with a generous drizzle of sesame ponzu sauce. This dish will bring me back to Caprice again and again.

Pizzas are served on a



Wild Salmon Carpaccio



Fennel Sausage Pizza

crispy, light flatbread made in-house. The Fennel Sausage version features house-made fennel-infused sausage, sweet peppers, and grilled onions.

Pasta offerings include pappardelle with grilled shrimp, wilted spinach and earthy wild mushrooms in a lemon-thyme cream sauce that marries the ingredients to each other perfectly.

Braised short ribs offer a platter of hearty and delicious comfort food. Served on a bed of polenta, they're plated with a meaty reduction of stock and vegetables redolent with red wine.

Desserts are created by pastry chef Sharon Yowell. The

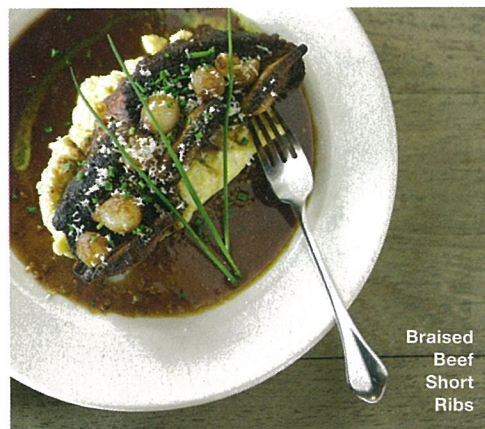
Bombe Amandes offers a lemon-almond shortbread crust surrounded by colorful circles of apricot and blueberry coulis and topped with vanilla ice cream from A La Minute creamery on the next block. Also outstanding is the Cinnamon Apple Dumpling in Filo Pastry. Drizzled

with caramel, sprinkled with toasted hazelnuts and topped with vanilla ice cream, this is a dessert that could convert a chocoholic to a different persuasion.

Snapshot: Caprice Cafe, 104 E. State St., Redlands; (909) 793-8787, capricecafe.com. Open for lunch and dinner daily except Sunday.



Caprice owner Chris Pepino enjoys a glass of wine and pappardelle with grilled shrimp.



Braised Beef Short Ribs

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