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## Wildflowers, Verona, NY, USA



**Wildflowers** the **AAA-rated four diamond restaurant** at [The Lodge at Turning Stone Resort Casino](#) in **Verona, New York** is one that you can easily dine at over several evenings and still find one more item that you want to try. The most difficult part of dining there is selecting only one starter, one entrée, and one dessert each, and although difficult, we did manage, and it was a nice problem to have. Chef de Cuisine Dustin Tuthill is the talent in the kitchen, and his menu is inspired, creative, and most important, very tasty!

The attractive and stylish 65-seat Wildflowers restaurant at The Lodge at Turning Stone has all of the ingredients for memorable dining: a talented chef in the kitchen, attentive professional service, and a gracious ambience perfect for celebrating special occasions, a romantic evening on the town, or simply because you love good food. The menu has a rich diversity that will appeal to the more adventurous eater as well as to the traditional diner, with more classic offerings.



**Chef Dustin Tuthill**

Low classical music sets the ambience, and purple calla lilies in bud vases and oil burning candles accent the white linen draped tables flanked by fuchsia and orange upholstered chairs and artfully curved floral print banquettes. A curved wall of windows adds interest, as does the art on the wood walls, and the architecturally interesting sweep of a ceiling accented with recessed lighting. For more intimate dining, there are two recessed booths.

Chef Dustin Tuthill began our culinary journey by sending us a delicious amuse bouche of seared sea bass with a thinly sliced dehydrated turnip, citrus and basil aioli, topped with micro-greens, which was a lovely "greeting" and introduction to his culinary style. The amuse bouche was the perfect companion to glasses of Domaine Chandon Brut Classic from Napa Valley, California, with its crisp green apple aromas and tropical fruit on the palate.



### **Amuse Bouche**

The restaurant has a nice selection of wines by the bottle as well as by the glass, with many wines from the New York State wine regions, perfect for pairing wines with each course. There were several very appealing starters on the menu, which made narrowing down our selections to one each rather difficult. After much consideration, (Edward) selected the Kobe Short Rib Zubuton served with parsley root puree, brussel sprouts, imperial stout crunch, garlic roots, and natural jus. This was a multi-sensory experience with the short rib served under a glass dome that visually stimulated the sense of sight with smoke captured under the dome. When our server Michael lifted the dome, the smoke and the enticing aromas wafted in the air involving the sense of smell. On the palate, it was a dream, fork tender meat complemented by contrasting flavors and textures, and the stout crunch was ingenious and very tasty. Chef Dustin Tilton's presentation was stunning, creative, and then followed through with taste, and was not simply a "pretty face" when faced with the crucial judgment of taste.



### **Kobe Short Rib Zubuton**

(Debra) had the Oysters on the Half Shell with Granny Smith apple consommé, yuzu, cucumber, and vanilla bean. From the menu description, one might expect the usual presentation of minced apple, and cucumber with yuzu and vanilla bean. Wrong! Chef Dustin artistically presented the Kumamoto oysters on a bed of smooth black stones, added sea bean and sea kelp, and foam made from the Granny Smith apple consommé to create a natural setting, as if one had happened upon them while strolling along a beach. As for the cucumber, he used it to create "caviar pearls" and placed them on top of the mild oysters, which had medium salinity and brininess, added miniature edible flowers in a nod to the name of the restaurant, and added a "liqueur" of yuzu and vanilla bean to give them a nice clean finish. Once again, Chef Dustin had created an incredible presentation with outstanding taste.



### Oysters on the Half Shell

For the salad course, (Edward) had the Caesar Salad, which was made tableside by Alex, our other server. For Caesar salad lovers, it does not get much better than this; garlic gently rubbed around a large wood bowl, egg yolk expertly whisked, then the addition of a blend of olive, canola, and extra virgin olive oils, more whisking, the addition of lemon juice, then dried mustard, Worcestershire sauce, grated parmesan cheese, and more whisking. Add in the romaine lettuce, toss with the dressing, and plate. Add parmesan crusted croutons, white anchovies, and shaved parmesan. It was delicious! Are you hungry yet?



### Caesar Salad

(Debra) had the Smoked Salmon "Potato Salad" with caviar, celery ribbons, baby fennel, horseradish crème fraiche, red onion, and dill. After experiencing the two starters, I knew that this would not be a mere potato salad, and I was correct in my assumption.



### Smoked Salmon

Next, there was a lovely intermezzo of orange coriander sorbet presented on a curved spoon to refresh the palate.



### Intermezzo - Orange Coriander

To compound our decisions in the selection of an entrée, Chef Dustin had also created some interesting specials of the evening. (Edward) decided on the special and had the pork with spinach and duxelle wrapped in puff pastry with an accompanying brandy sauce, and presented with pomme puree, roasted baby vegetables of carrots and brussel sprouts. The pairing was a glass of Faust, Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley, California, which was rich and full-bodied with nice complexity.



### Pork with Spinach

(Debra) had the Lobster Risotto entrée, which was creamy Arborio rice laden with lobster meat, rimmed with lobster oil, and then generously garnished with pinenuts and roasted fennel. The accompanying wine was a glass of the Sonoma-Cutrer, Chardonnay from Sonoma, California, which was rich and buttery with

nice minerality and fruitiness.



### Lobster Risotto

For dessert, we selected the Spiced Cheesecake, made with cranberry gel, cranberry caviar, compressed apple, apple meringue, and cranberry glass; and the Chocolate Ganache, flexible chocolate, black current gelato, chocolate glass, black current foam, and current gel.



### Spiced Cheesecake

Once again, expect the unexpected; the pastry team created the Spiced Cheesecake as a deconstructed and artistic interpretation using pink and white as its palette colors, with interestingly shaped cranberry "glass" made from sugar.

The attractively presented Chocolate Ganache had a rich chocolaty essence on the palate that worked well with the raspberry elements, and was a complementary finish to Chef Dustin Tuthill's sophisticated starters, salads, and entrees.



### **Chocolate Ganache**

The restaurant gets high marks not only for the well-prepared, inspired cuisine of Chef Dustin Tuthill, but also for the professional, knowledgeable, and attentive service team who help create a memorable evening of dining. Well done, Alex and Michael, you make a difference in front of the house service.



### **Debra and Chef Dustin Tuthill**

Wildflowers serves breakfast daily from 6:00 am until 11:00 am, and serves dinner Monday through Thursday from 5:00 pm until 10:00 pm, and on Friday and Saturday from 5:00 pm until 11:00 pm. The restaurant does not serve dinner on Sunday.

Read the [Chefs' Recipe](#) section for the interview with Chef Dustin Tuthill who shares a delicious taste of the restaurant with his [recipes](#).



### Wildflowers Restaurant

Read more about our experience staying at **The Lodge** in the **Hotels and Resorts**, about our dining experience at **TS Steakhouse** in the **Restaurants** section, about our experience at **Skana Spa** in the **Spas** section, and about our golf experience at **Shenendoah Golf Club at Turning Stone** in the **Adventures** section.



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