

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Water's Edge



Romantic restaurant where the waterviews are complimented by the stunning cuisine!



For me, there is something special about dining on the water, and [Water's Edge](#) has been creating special memories for diners since they opened in 1983. On a perfect summer's evening in July 2005, Edward F. Nesta and I took the complimentary Water's Edge River Boat shuttle from the 34th Street Dock in Manhattan to the restaurant. The quick shuttle ride provided a cooling breeze and a spectacular view of the Manhattan skyline, as we approached the restaurant.

Once inside this elegant restaurant, and seated at a table by the window, we had breathtaking views of Manhattan. There is also a large deck where diners can enjoy al fresco dining, but with the warm temperature, it was delightful to sit indoors and still have a fabulous view, and watch the kayaks pass.



When our server, Mona came by, and asked what we would like to drink, Edward decided on a Manhattan and I selected a glass of champagne. She returned moments later and poured him a perfect Manhattan poured from a shaker at tableside, as I enjoyed my glass of Perrier-Jouet champagne. The restaurant has an award-winning wine list with over 1,000 bottles as well as many wines by the glass. It was the perfect beginning of our evening with live piano music creating a romantic ambience.



Although their New American menu had many wonderful selections, our waiters, Mona and Halim, helped us decide to sample the Chef's Choice 4-Course Tasting Menu with a Surprise, and put ourselves in Executive Chef Ari Nieminen's capable hands. Our attentive waitstaff brought a selection of freshly baked

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hot from the oven white, wheat and walnut raisin rolls, which we savored with our cocktails.

We began our Tasting Menu with *Tuna Prepared Three Ways* which consisted of tuna tartar with crème fraiche, seared tuna with wasabi topika, a tuna summer roll and pickled watermelon which were presented in 4 porcelain square dishes inside a square wooden box and served with nutmeg vinegar and wasabi, which was paired with a 2004 Domaine des Brissonnes Sancerre wine from the Loire Valley. The Sancerre had a lavender nose, with pear en bouche and a crisp finish.

For our 2nd course, Chef Ari selected the *Grilled Shrimp, Sweet Corn Flan, Pepper Coulis and Mache Salad* which was paired with a 2001 Husch La Ribera Vineyard Chardonnay, which was a golden color with heavy oak on the palate. The grilled shrimp were perfect, the sweet corn flan had a brûlée top with a delicate creaminess, and my only complaint was that I would have liked more of the flan.



For our 3rd course, Chef Ari surprised me with a *Miso Glazed Chilean Sea Bass with Jasmine Rice, Baby Shiitake Mushrooms, and Harticots Verts*, which was paired with a 2001 "St. Michel Eppan" Alto Adige Pinot Grigio, a crisp wine with essence of apple and pear; and for Edward, *Seared Foie Gras, with Peach and Black Fig Salad with a Marsala Wine Reduction* which was served with figs, raspberries peaches and raisin bread toast, which was paired with a 2002 Muscat de Beaumes de Venise Domaine de Coveau. A blood orange granita topped with Perrier-Jouet champagne followed as a palate cleanser.

While Chef Ari was doing an amazing job with each of the courses and his artistic presentations, the Manhattan skyline kept trying to compete by becoming even more enchanting, as the sun slowly started to set behind the buildings creating stunning illuminated silhouettes.

For Edward, his 4th course was *Rack of Lamb, with Ratatouille, Potato Croquettes and Zinfandel Sauce*, which was paired with a 2001 Palander Shiraz, and for me, *Potato Crusted Turbot with Braised Leeks and Fresh Oyster Sauce*, which was paired with a 2001 Laetitia Estate Pinot Noir, which was light on the palate with a slight spiciness, and a black cherry nose.

For dessert, Chef Ari surprised us with a warm chocolate cake, a strawberry tart with sabayon cream, and a fruit punch soufflé served with blood orange whipped cream, which was the ultimate decadence.



After dessert, we had the opportunity to meet with Chef Ari and learn more about this Finnish native, who graduated from the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in New York, worked with such notable New York chefs as Charlie Palmer and David Burke at the River Café, was the Executive Chef at the FireBird

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Restaurant, and the head chef at the Four Seasons in New York, before joining Water's Edge in September 2004. He is also frequently seen on television shows, and even finds time to teach cooking.

So, how does he spend his free time? "I cook. I feel blessed that I love what I do. Of course there is stress, but you focus on serving the guests, and create a balance in your life. I run, I am passionate about running." He has raced Morris Minis on the ice and dirt in Finland, as well as an old 1996 Saab that he raced on the ice over the lakes, and loves Formula I. He also creates ice sculptures as showpieces for events and parties. Married for 18 years with a 2½-year old daughter, he and his wife enjoy introducing their daughter to everything. She has her own play kitchen, and enjoys playing restaurant where she makes "soft-shell crabs." It seems he is training her to become a chef. Chef Ari is always testing new ideas on the staff, to keep the menu fresh, and changes the menus seasonally.



We enjoyed espressos accompanied by miniature cookies, before taking the River Boat shuttle back to Manhattan. On the ride back, we had an engaging conversation with the actors Gina Tognoni and Tom Pelphrey, but Guiding Light fans will probably know them better by their character names of Dinah Marler and JB/Jonathan Randall, who also had an enjoyable evening at the Water's Edge. So, who goes to Water's Edge? It seems that everyone does, and certainly not just for the views!

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