

Perry's Steakhouse

While Perry's offers a \$60 Spice dinner, they also have a five-course \$99 Spice menu for an over-the-top culinary experience. The first course choices include tempura fried lobster with crabmeat, and either three ounces of sliced Texas Wagyu NY strip or two ounces of "true" Japanese Wagyu beef. While this is a steakhouse, we've never tasted better lobster or crab, both soft, moist, and redolent with flavor. The NY Wagyu was like beef butter with a crispy edge.

For the second course, we tried the creamy artichoke, potato, and leek soup with truffle oil (wonderful), and the signature wedge salad, which came ice cold and sliced horizontally on the plate – for an even spread of crumbled bacon and blue cheese, cherry tomatoes, and blue cheese dressing. Superb for blue cheese lovers. You can also pick French onion soup or Caesar salad.

The third course is a lemon or raspberry sorbet to cleanse the palate for course four: one of two steaks (we let the cedar plank-fired redfish go). The first was an eight-ounce filet, served on a hot cast-iron plate and topped with fresh crab meat. Delicious, but the real flavor came packed in the 20-ounce prime, bone-in, New York strip, beautifully seasoned and grilled. Each bite a thrilling burst of salty, juicy flavor.

The final course was the dessert, with three choices. We tried the orange vanilla cream cheesecake, bright and sweet like an orange cream ice cream bar. There is also crème brûlée, but we loved the chocolate crunch – dark chocolate mousse on a cracker base with a nut-sprinkled whip cream on top. A decadent ending to a decadent Spice menu, served in the low-lit elegance of Perry's.

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20-OZ. PRIME, BONE-IN NEW YORK STRIP

Fontana

The only drawback to having a Miami Spice dinner at Fontana this month is that it's too hot outside to enjoy the restaurant's outdoor courtyard at the Biltmore. But sitting inside by the kitchen is an elegant experience itself.

The Fiori di Zucca Ripieni is our appetizer of choice from the Spice dinner menu, a fried squash blossom stuffed with ricotta and parmesan cheese, tomato coulis (a thin tomato sauce seasoned with herbs), and a hint of lemon zest. Make sure you get a bit of sauce with every bite. Despite the fried rind, it's a deceptively light dish.

For an entrée, the Aragosta Fra Diavolo is the perfect combination of two of the other options – lasagna or grilled octopus. The fettucine pasta dish comes with cold water lobster and a thick pomodoro sauce. The addition of Calabrian pepper gives it a little bit of a devilish kick, where we expect the "Diavolo" comes from (it means "devil" in Italian). A hearty meal, so take your time if you want to leave room for dessert – tiramisu, blackout chocolate cake, or a choice of seasonal gelato or sorbet.

As part of the experience, Woodford Reserve is partnering with Miami Spice to offer up discounted cocktails. At Fontana, that means a \$15 Manhattan or Whiskey Sour. If you take a photo of your favorite dish paired with one of the Woodford cocktails, you can enter for a chance to win \$500 at woodfordreserve.com. *Bon appetit!*

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ARAGOSTA FRA DIAVOLO