

MERIDIAN RESTAURANT & BAR

Writer / Marc D. Allan

Meridian Restaurant & Bar manages to pull off a fairly spectacular feat: It's both elegant and casual at the same time.

Yes, there are white tablecloths and black napkins, but the décor spotlights the restaurant's inner log cabin. A thend music overhead is SiriusXM real jazz. A suit is appropriate attire here, but the night I went to dine, I saw a guy fitting in comfortably in shorts and a T-shirt.

Executive chef Dean Sample takes the presentation of the food as seriously as he takes quality and taste, but he mixes ingredients playfully and surprisingly—shrimp, pork belly and a plum sauce; braised lamb served as Moroccan barbecue; a “water salad” consisting of watermelon, watercress and water chestnuts.

“Isn't it fun?” Our server asked as we made our way through the Taste of Indiana appetizer that featured smoking goose meats, local cheeses, tiny sweet pickles, mustards and rye toast presented in a manner that brought to mind a delightful picnic for little children. I had to agree—it was fun.

Meridian has been at 5694 N. Meridian St. for nearly seven years since replacing longtime Indianapolis staple Dodd's Townhouse. It's bigger and certainly more upscale than its predecessor. Not as homey, but that's OK. It makes up for that in selection, including a vast menu of wines and cocktails and a menu that changes seasonally, and taste. My favorite part of the meal may have been the smoked corn puree soup, which starts with a corn base and adds red peppers, potatoes and bacon. The result reminded me of a pumpkin soup with a spicy kick. The aforementioned shrimp and pork belly was served atop a ratatouille-like base dominated by udon noodles, pineapple and zucchini in a sweet plum sauce. Lamb has a fairly tame flavor, but the thinly shredded meat mixed nicely with the accompanying green beans and unusual smoked potato salad.

“Is everything delicious?” our server asked. I had to agree—it was delicious.

Meridian is open Monday-Saturday for lunch and every day for dinner. Dinner entrees range from \$22-\$39. More at meridianonmeridian.com. ■

M-TH 11 AM - 2:30 PM; 5 - 9:30 PM
FRI-SAT 11 AM - 2:30 PM; 5 - 10:30 PM
SUN 4 - 9 PM

5694 NORTH MERIDIAN ST., INDIANAPOLIS
317-466-1111
MERIDIANONMERIDIAN.COM