



A Study in Contrasts

GOING FROM SKI COUNTRY TO THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORE WITHOUT LEAVING D.C.

When it comes to spring-break ski getaways, I'm more of a sit-by-the-fireplace-with-a-warm-drink-in-hand gal than a double-black-diamond devotee. So I was excited to hear that Bourbon Steak at the Four Seasons Hotel, Washington D.C., in Georgetown had installed four ingenious "chalet suites" on its patio for the season, each boasting decor modeled after a different Four Seasons ski resort: Aspen, Jackson Hole, Whistler in Canada, and Megève

sweet or heavy. Ditto the Tea Time: With hazelnut-infused vodka, walnut, chai, and lemon, it sounded like a dessert drink but went down as a nutty, dry, spicy tippie we kept going back to.

Of course, head sommelier Winn Robertson was on hand to uncork fun and surprising finds for what we referred to as our "rib eye-off": ordering and comparing a grass-fed cut from Cape Grim, Australia, with wagyu from 7X Cattle Company in Colorado. We

pretended it was aperitivo hour on the Mediterranean coast with the Santé Spritz, which mixed local Catoctin Creek Gin with Campari and grapefruit soda, and the South of France Sparkler, combining Cîroc Vodka, lemon, mint, lavender, and a Prosecco float. *Buonissimo!*

On to the meal: A grilled Virginia oyster bathed in tangy harissa butter found its foil in luscious Sauternes, while the gorgeous earthiness of beet

PHOTO: GREG POWERS



A "chalet suite" at the Four Seasons Hotel, Washington D.C.

PHOTO: GREG POWERS



Santé's lamb osso buco.

in France. The cozy, custom-built wooden structures turned out to be my après-ski dream come true. Depending on your evening plans, they could be set with a round dining table for two to six guests or with sofas, low tables, and lots of blankets for curling up over cocktails. Niceties included space heaters and Bluetooth speaker hookups, while outdoor firepits with communal seating were only steps away.

On our visit in February, my friend and I took a virtual trip to Wyoming, sliding the door closed to ward off the chill and settling in with a round of fabulous libations. Featuring gin, dry vermouth, lemon, and plump figs, the vanilla-scented Action Figure gave a nod to the season without being too

Bourbon Steak's gin-based Action Figure cocktail is flavored with figs and vanilla.

loved both, but preferred the flavorful Down Under steak to the decadence of the latter.

Across the bridge in northern Virginia, another luxury hotel—The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City—revamped its dining venue last fall, opening the 64-seat Santé as a spot for Mediterranean small plates and global wines. Executive chef Phil Skerman and chef de cuisine Kevin Marshall-Broderick—with the help of director of food and beverage Shaun Henesy—created a special six-course menu with wine pairings for my companion and me that hit a lot of high notes. But first, in keeping with the concept, we

and burrata salad with shaved fennel, pistachios, and lavash was balanced by the restraint of Bordeaux Blanc. Tender grilled octopus was given a decidedly Spanish treatment with chorizo, olives, romesco, and a fruity crianza Tempranillo; one of my all-time favorite whites—mineral-driven, citrusy Sancerre—made an appearance alongside pan-seared black bass in brown butter beurre blanc; and lamb osso buco with okra and rosemary couscous was perfect with a chewy Priorat Garnacha blend. Sure, we didn't need dessert. But given whimsical, Champagne-paired options like a baklava-inspired sundae and warm olive-oil cake with brûléed figs and lemon chantilly, we thought, why not? **LV**

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Pink Lemonade Flavored Vodka, Alcohol 30% by Volume (60 Proof).
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