

DINING OUT

Icehouse Waterfront Restaurant is a natural choice for coastal waterfront dining in Swansboro.

The lunch menu at the Icehouse offers patrons a world of choice, from starters, to salads, to pasta, to burgers and sandwiches, many featuring seafood. Starters include calamari, clam, crab, shrimp and tuna preparations. The salads include Caesar, Greek, Asian noodle and a "Lady Brasse" salad, the last composed inventively of greens, caramelized pecans, raisins and garden vegetables, then finished with blue cheese crumbles and a raspberry vinaigrette dressing. The salads themselves may be enhanced with grilled or flash-fried calamari, chicken, mahi-mahi or shrimp for an additional charge. Starters are priced from \$3.59 and salads from \$5.59.

Especially interesting as a lunch option are the pastas. They range from alfredo and shrimp scampi-style fettuccini creations, to Cajun chicken with penne, to capellini alla checca—a light combination of herbs, spices, tomatoes, olive oil and white wine that is plated over angel hair pasta. Listed also on the pasta menu (curiously, but nonetheless deliciously) is a wonderful shrimp curry dish that blends caramelized fresh pineapple and mango with cilantro, coconut and shrimp, then presents this mélange artfully over organic greens and a pilaf of basmati and wild rice. The cost of individual pasta dishes begins at \$7.79.

Lunchtime burger and sandwich possibilities offer patrons a happy choice among several meat and seafood options. The beef burgers include the Black and Bleu with Cajun spices and blue cheese; the Tex-Mex with jalapenos, pepper-jack cheese and salsa; the Cali with avocado, smoked Gouda cheese and chipotle ranch dressing; the Greek with feta cheese, Kalamata olives and roasted red peppers; and the Caprese with basil, tomatoes and fresh mozzarella cheese. Seafood burgers center on the customer's selection of oysters, shrimp or soft shell crabs. Sandwiches themselves include several chicken options, both grilled and fried, as well as fish tacos and fish sandwiches filled with a choice among flounder, grouper or mahi-mahi, again either grilled or fried. These items are priced beginning at \$7.29.

Much as its lunch counterpart, the dinner menu at the Icehouse presents patrons with many interesting choices. "Entrees from the Sea," for example, include Alaskan snow crab, grouper, stuffed flounder and shrimp and grits. The two grouper options are especially compelling. One is pesto and pecan encrusted, then pan seared and topped with blackened scallops. The other, Icehouse Grouper Royale, is encrusted with crushed bacon, potato and herbs, and then bathed in a house-made

After a cold winter destined for the record books, along the Crystal Coast we are more than ready for the balmy days of deep spring and the warmth of summer. The weather is now so good, in fact, that it is likely to tempt us to take a drive to several of the quaint towns in the area. Surely one such place is Swansboro. And, if we decide to eat out, the

beurre blanc sauce, a traditional French sauce consisting of a shallot, vinegar and white wine reduction that is whisked together with butter. Also among the seafood selections are some enticing pasta dishes. These include Scallops Romana, sea scallops brought together with bacon, Kalamata olives, roasted red peppers, spinach and fresh tomatoes, then tossed in a light Gorgonzola cream sauce and presented over linguine; and Seafood Marinara, comprised of calamari, clams, mussels, scallops and shrimp combined in a light marinara sauce, also served over linguine. The prices for Entrees from the Sea begin at \$16.99.

Chicken and beef entrees also appear on the dinner menu. Among the chicken dishes are Chicken Française, lightly battered chicken breasts that are pan seared and plated in a lemon and white wine sauce; and Chicken Marsala, medallions of chicken breast simmered in a rich mushroom and marsala wine demi-glace and finished with butter and fresh herbs. The beef entrees are prepared with Angus beef. They include filet mignon, New York strip steak, prime rib and ribeye steaks, prepared traditionally, or differently as black and bleu, Oscar style, pepper encrusted or in a cabernet-mushroom demi-glace. Chicken dishes are priced from \$13.99, while beef items are priced from \$16.99.

For patrons who prefer small plates, the Icehouse offers a tapas menu, serving such creations as baked brie cheese, calamari, crab cakes, hummus, flash-fried fresh vegetables, fried cheese ravioli, sushi tuna and falafel, chickpeas blended with herbs and spices and accompanied by a cucumber tzatziki sauce. It also features small "slider" sandwiches made with ahi tuna, bison, jerk chicken or pulled pork. Each of these items is modest in cost.

Desserts, too, are found on the Icehouse menu. Among them are tempting treats like cheese cake, cannoli, carrot cake, crème brûlée and chocolate cake, again each modestly priced.

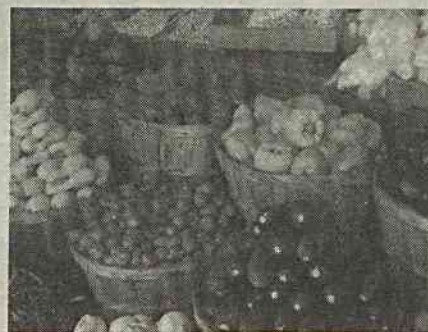
The Icehouse Waterfront Restaurant is located at 103 Moore Street in historic Swansboro. It is open for business from 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Sunday through Thursday, and from 11 a.m.-11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Its telephone number is 910-325-0501, and its website is www.SwansboroIcehouse.com.

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