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RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Soho still going strong at 14

A flexible approach to dining keeps the experience fresh and fun.
By [H.M. Cauley](#) | [Email the author](#) | December 31, 2010

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Soho still going strong at 14

A flexible approach to dining keeps the experience fresh and fun.

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The economy has been hard on local restaurants, but one Vinings destination has found that a little flexibility keeps the crowds coming back. [Soho](#), the cozy eatery tucked into the upper level of Vinings Jubilee, continues to be a favorite with diners, whether they're looking for old favorites, seasonal creations, small plates or an introduction to a new wine.

Co-owners Susan Smith, along with her husband Frank Smith and executive chef Joey Ahn, have adapted their style to reflect current food trends as well as the way their guests want to eat. So while there's still a selection for those who want to splurge on the signature sea bass, there are plenty of other options as well.

"Last year, we started doing weekly selections of small plates and wine flights," said Smith. "Undoubtedly, it has made a huge difference for us. Not everyone eats like they used to, especially our younger diners - they want to float in, have a glass of wine and tapas at the bar and move on."

The \$6 tapas treats such as potato gnocchi Bolognese or braised lamb shank with barley risotto also appeal to diners who want to try different dishes and wines without spending too much, said Smith.

"It's great from a budget sense: People are going out the door saying, 'That was a nice stop' instead of worrying that they spent \$100 on a meal."

Through January, Soho's tapas menu will be built around the theme "Out with the Old; In with the New," centering on familiar wine makers and their new products. Each week, different wines, tapas and cheeses will be featured.

"That way, there's always something new to try," said Smith. "And chances are, some of the wines we'll be featuring will only be here for that one week; they won't be part of the regular menu."

Six months ago, the staff also changed the way they bought produce and began making more frequent trips to the state farmers' market. From the available, seasonal ingredients, Ahn has created dishes such as cranberry lima beans and peach salad. Those special servings complement the menu anchors of ginger-soy glazed calamari, Thai salmon, chicken tortilla soup, chocolate bread pudding and the buttery sea bass with lemon grass beurre blanc.

"Oh, there are several mainstays that we won't change," said Smith. "In fact, we once tried to take the sea bass away, and there was such an uproar that I had to send out an e-mail begging for everyone's forgiveness."

Diners will also find entrees of shrimp linguini, apple and sausage ravioli, crab cakes, short ribs and elk tenderloin, with prices ranging from \$16 to \$29. Lighter fare includes sandwiches and burgers; beef, crab and fried green



tomato sliders; seasonal vegetable sides; and a rotating selection of cheeses. And each dish is enhanced by a pairing from the extensive, global wine list that's featured during regular wine tasting events posted on the restaurant's website.

Keeping the mix of food and wine fresh and creative is going to be key as Soho enters its 14th year of operation - no small feat in a tough industry, Smith pointed out.

"Because you know, these days," she said with a laugh, "fourteen years for a restaurant is like two lifetimes."

SOHO BASICS

Soho

4300 Paces Ferry Road

770- 801-0069

www.sohoatlanta.com

Hours: Lunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Mondays-Fridays, Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays; 5:30-11 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays; 5-9 p.m. Sundays

Keeping the mix of food and wine fresh and creative has been key for Soho as it enters its 14th year of operation.

Credit Soho

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