

# restaurants

## The new Black Butte



Patrons enjoy the view while dining in the Black Butte Ranch main lodge dining room on Sept. 30.

Andy Tuttle / The Bulletin

## Young chef brings creative flair to the resort's updated dining room

By John Gottberg Anderson  
For The Bulletin

If I weren't writing today about Adam Kapela, it would only be a matter of time before this outstanding young chef appeared on Central Oregon's culinary radar.

The executive sous chef at Black Butte Ranch, Kapela is 26 years old, and the young man can flat-out cook.

Arriving in the Sisters area just over a year ago from Colorado's Aspen Meadows Resort, Kapela quickly established himself as the right-hand man to Black Butte's executive chef, Dean Ecker. When I dined a couple of weeks ago at Black Butte Ranch, he impressed me as much as any chef in this region has done in a long time.

In his role as executive sous chef, Kapela is the hands-on kitchen master. Under Ecker's direction, he was responsible for the redesign of the gourmet menu

Kapela also helped to create the casual menus at Black Butte's new Robert's Pub, a seasonal cafe located in the Big Meadow Clubhouse, and at the summer-only Lakeside Bistro.

I had an excellent lunch at Robert's before it closed last weekend for the fall and winter months. More significantly, my dining companion and I enjoyed a superb dinner in The New Lodge Restaurant.

### Wilderness luxury

We arrived for our dining reservation at the Black Butte Lodge, eight miles northwest of Sisters via U.S. Highway 20, a half hour before sunset. We walked through the lobby of the lodge to a short set of dark wooden steps, at the top of which we were greeted by a pleasant hostess and shown to our seats in the main dining room.

Through large windows, across a tranquil pond

### The New Lodge Restaurant

**Location:** 13653 Hawksbeard Road, Black Butte Ranch; 8 miles west of Sisters at milepost 93, U.S. Highway 20

**Hours:** Breakfast 8 to 11:30 a.m., lunch 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., dinner 5 p.m. to close, Wednesday to Sunday

**Price range:** Breakfast \$5 to \$14; lunch \$8 to \$16; dinner appetizers \$6 to \$14, entrees \$17 to \$32

**Credit cards:** American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa

**Kids' menu:** Yes

**Vegetarian menu:** Several options

**Reservations:** Recommended

**Contact:** 541-595-1260, 866-901-2961 or [www.blackbutteranch.com/dining](http://www.blackbutteranch.com/dining)

### Scorecard

**OVERALL:** A

**Food:** A. Classic foods are given a new look with a perfect meeting of flavors and textures.

**Service:** A. Veteran waiters are prompt and knowledgeable, friendly yet never intrusive.

**Atmosphere:** A. Refurbished dining room combines modern rustic decor with mountain views.

**Value:** A-. Prices are not

## restaurants

## From previous page

As twilight descended, dozens of resident geese stalked off to their nests and were replaced by throngs of small bats flitting between the ponderosa pines, collecting their evening quota of insects.

A look at our immediate indoor surroundings returned us from the wilderness to modern luxury. Heavy cedar beams embraced polished hardwood floors. Contemporary accents played off rustic ranch-style decor, with posters and photographs highlighting the 40-year history of Black Butte Ranch.

Throughout the evening, service was equal to the decor. Veteran Central Oregon waiters were prompt and knowledgeable, taking and delivering orders efficiently, checking back to be sure we were satisfied with our meals. Always courteous, never intrusive, they were the kind of servers from whom other restaurants could take a cue.

## Memorable dinner

And then it was time for dinner. Everything was perfect.

From the moment we were served a tantalizing amuse-bouche — parsnip puree folded into spinach-and-egg pasta dumplings — we knew we were in for an interesting evening.

A calamari appetizer was Kapela's first big test. I have never had better.

Strips of squid were lightly battered in a chickpea flour, flash-fried and served without a hint of oiliness on a bed of arugula. They were presented with a sweet-and-spicy mango-chipotle dipping sauce, and drizzled with a cilantro pesto that was a wonderful complement to the other flavors.

Next, we shared a light salad that had just been introduced to the menu. Seared ahi tuna was laid upon spring greens with a



Andy Talis / The Bulletin

Herb-crusted loin of elk, left, and an 18-ounce cowboy rib-eye are served at Black Butte Ranch's main lodge, with a view of the Three Sisters in the background.

tangy, house-made wasabi vinaigrette dressing.

For our main dishes, we left the seacoast and moved into the mountain forests; my companion ordered an herb-crusted loin of elk, while I opted for wild-mushroom ravioli. Here, more than anywhere, we were impressed by Kapela's ability to blend textures and flavors, playing one off another for maximum effect.

## Entrees and dessert

The ravioli was one of several vegetarian dishes on the menu. If every meatless dish was as tasty as this one, I would happily become a full-time vegetarian.

Three tender, palm-sized dumplings, made in-house, were stuffed with chanterelles, shiitakes and other autumn fungi. They were served in a rich pistachio-pesto sauce, drizzled with balsamic vinegar and topped with shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. All I could say was: Wow!

My friend's elk was served as

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Bourbon Street  
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sliced medallions, seared rare according to her order. The crustling in pepper and other herbs locked in moisture, and the meat was very tender. A blueberry reduction sauce added sweetness, while a light goat-cheese coulis and crispy bacon-like slices of pancetta gave the meat smokiness. A side serving of sweet-potato hash was a perfect finishing touch.

And then there was dessert. As it turns out, Kapela, who is a graduate of the culinary program at Colorado Mountain College in Vail, also has expertise as a pastry chef.

We shared a serving of sour-dough chocolate cake, served warm with vanilla-bean ice cream. Expecting the sort of heavy, rich chocolate that seems to stay in one's stomach for hours, we planned to have a spoon or

two apiece and be done with it.

Instead, we discovered that the sourdough element gave the dessert a certain lightness. The cake was not heavy. The fudge sauce was more flavorful than filling. Splashes of vanilla cream, rather than whipped cream, added another flavor element. We ate every last bite.

## Robert's Pub

Because Robert's Pub won't reopen until next spring as the season at Black Butte's Big Meadow Golf Course winds down, I won't dwell on my lunch there with another friend.

This is a place where golfers and casual diners may dine indoors or out, at booths or tables, around a central fireplace or in front of TVs tuned to the Golf Channel. Yet although the setting is much more casual than at the lodge, I once again found the food to be excellent.

The Southwestern sweet-corn chowder, with a variety of vegetables (including potatoes, carrots, celery and onions) in a creamy base, was beautifully seasoned.

The grilled-chicken club sandwich was tender and tasty. It came with melted Havarti cheese, smoked bacon slices, a smoky chipotle aioli sauce and roasted tomatoes on a toasted focaccia bun.

The Alaskan bay-shrimp Louie, with plenty of seafood tossed with shredded cheese, hard-boiled egg, black olives, asparagus spears and halved grape tomatoes, were served upon chopped romaine lettuce with Thousand Island dressing. It was fresh and wonderful.

I would expect nothing less of young Adam Kapela.

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## SMALL BITES

Is the fourth time the charm? No sooner had the NW Urban Grill closed Sept. 25 than the owner of **Brickhouse Steak and Seafood**, a popular down-

town Redmond restaurant, announced he would open a second Brickhouse in that location. Brickhouse owner Jeff Porad said he hopes to have the Bend steakhouse running by Dec. 1. The Urban Grill was the third restaurant since summer 2009 to close in the same location, following Fireside red and River Mill Grill, 803 S.W. Industrial Way, Bend; 541-526-1782, [www.brickhouserestmond.com](http://www.brickhouserestmond.com).

The owner of **Chan's Chinese Restaurant**, which closed after an early-morning fire on Aug. 20, said that he plans to reopen the popular Asian restaurant "by Christmastime." Lap Chan said heat and smoke did about \$600,000 damage to the building and kitchen area. 1005 S.E. Third St., Bend; 541-389-1725, [www.chanschinese.com](http://www.chanschinese.com).

## RECENT REVIEWS

**Tart Bistro (B+):** Serving French-inspired global cuisine at a moderate price, Tart has taken over the downtown Bend corner once occupied by 28 and Barcelona. Preparation can be inconsistent, but mesclun salad and duck make a great meal, and service is highly reliable. Open 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday, 920 N.W. Bond St. (S. Clair Place), Bend; 541-385-0828, <http://tartbistro.com>.

**Rockin' Daves Bagel Bistro (A-):** The space is small, the music is loud, but this friendly and casual deli is worth seeking out. Freshly baked breads and house-prepared meats are served in generous portions, and a full meal is never more than \$10. Open 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Saturday, 661 N.E. Greenwood Ave., Bend; 541-318-8177, [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

**Thai Thai (B+):** Serving fresh and tasty if conservatively spiced meals, this friendly NorthWest Crossing cafe offers generous portions of Southeast Asian cuisine at moderate prices. Located near Summit High School, the cafe offers special lunchtime deals to students and faculty. Open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday, noon to 9 p.m. Saturday, 745 Mount Washington Drive, Suite 200, Bend; 541-633-7222, [www.thaithaibend.com](http://www.thaithaibend.com).

**Krista's at Widgi Creek (B+):** A clientele composed mainly of golfers and Widgi Creek residents supports this friendly bar-and-grill with a big outdoor deck next to the golf club's putting green. The menu features salads, sandwiches and pizzas that are simple but well prepared. Open 11 a.m. to

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