



dining

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FAB NEW TWISTS ON SOME OLD CLASSICS AT BLACK BUTTE

BY LINDEN GROSS ([HTTP://WWW.CASCADEAE.COM/AUTHOR/LINDEN/](http://www.cascadeae.com/author/linden/))© OCTOBER 2, 2017 ([HTTP://WWW.CASCADEAE.COM/FAB-NEW-TWISTS-OLD-CLASSICS-BLACK-BUTTE/](http://www.cascadeae.com/fab-new-twists-old-classics-black-butte/))

(Picture above: clam chowder, photo courtesy of WAVEJourney.com)

(<http://www.cascadeae.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/black-butte-twists-2.jpg>)*Halibut: Photos courtesy of WAVEJourney.com*

Dining at Black Butte would be a treat simply based on the view alone. But then there's the food. My friends and I had been wanting to return ever since seeing the Lodge's new menu. As usual, the meal didn't disappoint. Our only struggle was agreeing on which dishes were our absolute favorites.

The beef tenderloin carpaccio rang my bell and then some. The meat—drizzled with a tangy mustard-horseradish sauce and served with shaved red onion, capers and arugula—was cut so finely I barely had to chew. So far so classic, right? But wait. Crispy fried ribbons of fennel and slices of baguette topped with broiled Cambozola—a cross between a French soft-ripened triple cream cheese and Italian Gorgonzola—shot the dish into a whole different stratosphere.

The steamer clam chowder was equally surprising, although it shouldn't have been since chef de cuisine James Healy, who worked at Timberline Lodge for 13 years before landing at the Black Butte Lodge, dominated Oregon's chowder competitions for years. Instead of a thick cream sauce that the clams could probably perch on, this chowder had been lightened up with white wine and grilled lemon. Hello! My friends and I are already planning an après-ski return just for this stunningly delicious rendition.

Rounding out our top three appetizers were the Oregon bay shrimp and crab cakes, which come as a pair. They're huge, with a crunchy coating, shrimp mousse and lumps of crab. Add in a lemon-caper dill aioli and you've got a winner.

On the entrée front, I wasn't super excited when my friends wanted to order the Alaskan halibut, but I went along. The dish changed my mind about halibut forever. The pan-seared halibut medallion was crispy on the outside, moist on the inside and heaven when eaten with the sweet and pungent green curry-coconut broth.

I was equally uncertain about the diver scallop cioppino. I love scallops, but I've never understood the infatuation with cioppino. On the other hand, I hadn't tasted Chef Healy's version. Instead of what so often seems like tomato puree, this cioppino featured a tomato broth spiked with caramelized fennel, lobster jus, roasted garlic and pinot gris. The seafood itself was as ridiculously good as the broth and included halibut, steamer clams, shrimp and calamari in addition to the scallops.

The Carlton pork tenderloin medallions, which I was determined to order despite a lack of excitement from the rest of our table, also proved to be a hit. The meat was pink and super tender, and the creamy Calvados pan sauce and apple mostarda were divine.

Of our three desserts, the sour dough chocolate cake—a Black Butte tradition for decades—seemed a little dry to me, something I've experienced in the past. I had no complaints about the creamy vanilla bean crème brûlée. And the warm skillet cookie studded with melted chocolate chip and topped with vanilla ice cream should simply be illegal. The skillet cookie takes 15 minutes, so if you don't have time to hang out make sure you pre-order. This is one you don't want to miss.

The Black Butte Lodge
541-595-1260

www.blackbutteranch.com/dining (<http://www.blackbutteranch.com/dining>)

Food/Beverage Manger & Executive Chef: Dean Ecker

Hours: Wednesday-Sunday 5pm-close