

## » dining out this week «

# You do the biting at Amos Mosquito's

BY SHERLEY BUCKLAND

**T**his week I found myself dining out at Amos Mosquito's Restaurant and Bar in Atlantic Beach, where owners Hallock and Sandy Howard have spent the last nine years building something special, and it shows.

I visited Amos Mosquito's on a Thursday, which is sushi night — YUM! Needless to say, my evening started with the crispy fried shrimp roll and iceberg wedge salad. Anyone new to sushi should try the crispy fried shrimp roll first and you're sure to be hooked, or should I say, "bitton." Crispy fried shrimp are rolled in sushi rice with scallion and avocado, yielding smooth fresh flavors accented by the shaved ginger and wasabi paste served with it, delicious.

The iceberg wedge salad is a cool, refreshing treat that reminded me of summertime. Topped with a mild, palate-pleasing homemade blue cheese dressing, crumbled bacon and fresh ground black pepper, one bite will make you smile.

Both appetizers paired beautifully with the Argentine Altosur Sauvignon Blanc. The Altosur is a crisp, grassy Sauvignon Blanc — very big in flavor with a smooth

balanced finish. The Altosur would pair well with all the seafood and pasta dishes on the menu at Amos Mosquito's — definitely with the ones I sampled.

Next to arrive at the table was the ginger-pork shao mai and coconut shrimp. The shao mai are absolutely marvelous steamed Chinese dumplings full of pork and ginger, then served with a sesame-soy dipping sauce. They are so beautiful; they look like little drawstring gift bags presented in a bamboo basket with chopsticks — man, what a present!

For the coconut shrimp, large shrimp are butterfly cut, rolled in coconut, lightly seasoned, fried and then served with a sweet chili dipping sauce — delightfully more than a mouth full of flavor in each bite.

The shao mai and coconut shrimp are lovely with the Lurton Pinot Gris. Also an Argentine wine, the fruity flavors in this Pinot Gris really accented the coconut in the shrimp and brought out the ginger in the pork.

When the entrees came out for dinner we (myself,

my dining companion and the photographer) were astounded at the generous amounts of food on each plate. Looking around the dining room we couldn't help but notice that held true for every plate at every table.

The lump crab cakes are the most popular menu item at Amos Mosquito's. Local lump crabmeat is mixed with roasted corn, pureed scallops and panko breading. The corn and pureed scallops give the crab cakes an interesting texture and great flavor combination. Served over penne

pasta with garlic, spinach and sun-dried tomatoes, the cakes are then topped with a chipotle aioli for a little kick.

The Southern fried pork chops are my favorite. White Marble Farms boneless pork chops are hand pounded, seasoned with eleven herbs and spices, battered and fried. Then

they are topped with tasso ham gravy. Tasso ham is a specialty of Cajun cuisine where pork is cured in salt, sugar, cayenne pepper and garlic. The ham is then used in an assortment of dishes for its intense flavors. Chef Alexander's gravy is just right — full of flavor, not heat. The pork chops are served with smashed potatoes and sautéed spinach. You will sleep well after this meal.

The large shrimp and local sea scallops are sautéed with asparagus, onion and sun-dried tomatoes, then tossed with linguine in a basil pesto cream sauce with Parmesan cheese. The fork-tender scallops are melt-in-your-mouth delicious. The pesto cream sauce and linguine is heavenly and makes great leftovers — you will not be able to eat it all.

The entrée selection that is the most fun to eat is the mixed grill. Skewers of beef tips with red onion, shrimp with red bell pepper, and scallops wrapped in bacon, top a bed of balsamic dressed mixed greens and are accompanied by smashed potatoes.

The certified Angus beef filet topped with local lump crabmeat and a twelve-pepper cream sauce was out of this world. Cooked to the chef's recommended medium-rare temperature, the filet is tender and flavorful — even without the sauce. The grilled asparagus and

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smashed potatoes accompanying the filet did not last long either.

Because I was so full from all of this glorious Amos Mosquito's food, I did not even consider dessert until they brought it to the table. Homemade key lime pie with graham cracker crust and home made cheesecake with Oreo cookie crust and lemon curd topping. There are not words to describe how incredibly good Oreo chocolate, cream cheese and lemon taste together. Maybe the photograph will help, otherwise just order it. You can thank me later.

#### Location

703 E. Fort  
Macon Road

#### Price Range

\$5-30

#### Reservations

Accepted

#### Dress

Business casual

#### Phone

(252) 247-6222

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