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Review: Old Hickory Steakhouse at the Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville

By **Isabelle Esteves**

There are numerous dining choices at Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville. If you are craving steak then Old Hickory is the place to satisfy you. Located in an antebellum style mansion built to mimic the General Beauregard House from New Orleans you will find the cuisine can satisfy even the most discriminating palate. The location is in the Delta Section and if you are sitting on the upper terrace you will have a front row seat to the water show that takes place at regular intervals.

The appetizer choices are sophisticated. Escargot done with garlic butter, artisan cheeses, a jumbo shrimp cocktail and the most amazing flash fried oysters Rockefeller, they have a corn meal crust and are served on a tiny bed of spinach. The crab cakes are 95% lump crab meat held together with Panko bread crumbs, they come served with aioli and a spicy Asian slaw that adds the bite of vinegar. They offer lobster bisque that is divine and the onion soup is a very close second. Salad choices run from the expected Caesar to signature Chop Chop which has gained the status of permanent menu item. The Old Hickory garden salad however with the heirloom tomatoes is one of the best I have ever eaten. Imagine eating tomatoes in January that taste garden fresh, it seems impossible but they even smelled like garden tomatoes and the ramp dressing is outstanding.

The most difficult part of dining here is deciding what to have for your entree. The carnivores are well provided for with the 22 oz cowboy rib eye, porterhouse steak, strip steak and two filets. All of their beef except for the 10oz grass fed filet is from a cattle ranch in Grand Island Nebraska. It isn't all beef however there is a rack of lamb, organic chicken, diver scallops, salmon and swordfish. The meals are ala carte so you will need to choose your sides which will be served family style in servings that will feed 3 to 4 people excessively. No matter what your preferences, smashed red bliss potatoes, creamed spinach, asparagus with hollandaise sauce or Mac and cheese, they offer it.

Try to save room for dessert. I know it will be hard, but it would be a terrible shame to deny yourself the opportunity. There is the most amazing crême brulee made with vanilla from Madagascar and served so that all the elements melt in your mouth. The bread pudding is dense and redolent with raisins and cinnamon, and what I think was a rum or brandy sauce. The most amazing dessert of all however is the popcorn ice cream, I know pop corn ice cream? But yes served in a waffle cone with caramel sauce it will knock your socks off, close your eyes and let the salty taste of popcorn send your senses reeling.

If you didn't choose the artisan cheeses as one of your appetizers don't leave without having some. They make an excellent savory after dinner presentation. The choices will vary but will be outstanding. They will span the European continent as well as the US and offer goat, cow, sheep and combination cheeses from small farms where the art of cheese making is a cherished tradition. You may get to taste the most luscious triple cream Fromager D'Affinois from France a brie type cheese with an amazing creamy texture or a Primmadonna from Holland with a sweet slightly nutty taste and a complexity that is sure to please. You can choose a tasting plate of three or six varieties and it may just be the highlight of your meal. All the cheeses will be explained to you so that you can make an informed choice but rest assured the quality will be outstanding.

Service at every level within the restaurant is friendly and efficient. The staff is knowledgeable and will make you feel like a cherished member of the family. Your glass will never sit empty nor will empty plates linger on your table. From the moment you are welcomed in to the restaurant you will feel just that, welcomed.

The Old Hickory can only be classified as fine dining in a comfortable and business casual atmosphere. It is sure to be the highlight of your stay at the Gaylord Opryland Resort or your visit in Nashville if you are not a resort guest.

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