

Clint Eats



By Clint Hamblin



Vlora's Watermelon and Feta Tidbit

Vlora. Chef Aldo Velaj loves to cook naturally healthy dishes from the North Mediterranean region, including Southern Italy, Greece and Velaj's homeland, Albania. His restaurant, Vlora, named after the city where Velaj was born, is located at 545 Boylston Street. A short trip downstairs transports you to a taverna on a Greek island, where you have to try the smashingly good Fork-Tender Grilled Octopus appetizer. Now don't go wrinkling up your nose at the thought of octopus. This scary looking sea creature is lightly dressed with olive oil, oregano and served with cucumber and tomato bites and is incredibly delicious. There's also the Watermelon and Feta Tidbit, which partners the sweet of the melon with the salt of the Feta cheese. These two dishes alone are worthy of a visit to Vlora.

But it doesn't stop there. Velaj's menu appeals to both vegetarians and meat lovers, including The Fasule or gigante beans, frisée, roasted red peppers and homemade garlic vinaigrette or the Tursi, pickled eggplant stuffed with red peppers and garlic.

The Arancini Siciliani includes mushroom and feta filling, fresh tomato and mint sauce, and the Trio of Pies offers little homemade phyllo pies with spinach and feta, yogurt, and tomato and onion fillings.

How about a Rack of Lamb with Vegetable Primavera or a Grilled Whole Striped Bass served with Mixed Local Greens? Desserts include a homemade Baklava like you've never had before or you could skip everything and just have a Kasata or frozen parfait with baked almonds. Outstanding!

RumBa anyone? When you think of RumBa, you probably don't think of a rum

bar, but that's where the name comes from. Rum bar with a Boston accent equals RumBa, and that's exactly what you'll find at this trendy rum and champagne watering hole located within the InterContinental Hotel on Atlantic Avenue.

Rum, in all of its glorious forms, is the star of the full bar, including reserved rum with flecks of floating gold to the forever standard Mai Tai, or how about a Pineapple Mojito? If you've got a passion for cold seafood, brace yourself for RumBa's Monte Carlo, a tower of oysters, Cape Cod top neck and little neck clams, Blue Hill Bay mussels, shrimp, lobster, Alaskan king crab legs and the most beautiful pink and succulent langoustines you've ever eaten.

Jasper White's Summer Shack. It may be clam shack casual but the food and service are absolutely first class at this restaurant at 50 Dalton Street, and what else would you expect from Jasper White, one of the most innovative and enduring chefs Boston has ever seen. Let's start with plump and fresh raw oysters that slide off the shell into your mouth or a powerful Clam Seviche with a zesty oyster shooter that will knock your socks off.

The fried clams (with bellies, please) are crunchy and full of flavor as are the Ipswich steamers. White's Bluefish is superb and perfectly prepared, and there's nothing better than the sweet and tender meat found in Summer Shack's twin lobster special. You don't even need the butter.

A slice of Boston crème pie or blueberry pie with vanilla ice cream tops off this meal and makes a memory that will keep your mouth watering for a long time.

Le Patisserie. A new desserterie located at 140 Boylston Street is run by Sarah Woodfine, a young and very capable pas-



RumBa's Tower of Seafood

try chef. Woodfine has her hands full creating stunning and delicious desserts for both Le Patisserie and Troquet, an upscale restaurant located above. Le Patisserie is open every Tuesday through Saturday evening from 5 to 11 pm on the lower level of Troquet.

Swing by and pair your Sticky Toffee Pudding with Brandied Tuile, Candied Dates and Crème Fraiche Ice Cream with a glass of 1927 Alvear, Pedro Ximenez. Yum! How about a Honey Crisp Peach Soufflé with warm peach compote and vanilla ice cream?

If you're really serious, try the Three-Course Dessert Tasting Menu all paired with wine.

If you're not quite ready for dessert, take a look at the savory menu of soups and sandwiches. The Cubano Panino is served with chipotles, Niman Ranch ham and smoked gruyere, and it's quite good.



Le Patisserie's Blackberry Tart



Bill Brett and Joe Fallon



Lisa Hughes, Peg Rusconi and Pat Kreger

A Wonderful Life

More than 1,500 guests flocked to Fan Pier on September 4 for a tribute to *Boston Globe* photographer Bill Brett, who signed copies of his new book, *Boston: A Year in the Life*.



Bill Brett signing copies of his book



Molly Dunne, Coco Grace and Kate Shamon