

# Dining

WHAT'S COOKING AROUND TAMPA BAY



A marvelous interior proves most inviting at New City Bistro, on S Westshore Boulevard in Tampa.

## We have arrived at a wondrous New City

■ An innovative bistro now leads Tampa's restaurant establishment into the future of dining. We couldn't be more excited.

By CHRIS SHERMAN  
Times Restaurant Critic

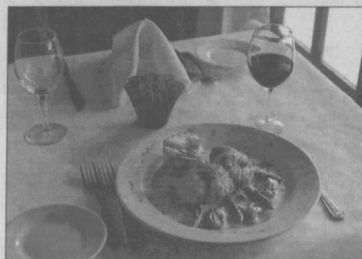
TAMPA—The Nibbler's first bites were tantalizing. My second, a few weeks later, were convincing. New City Bistro is Tampa's most promising new restaurant.

It does promise a lot. The legend under the name boasts "Urban Dining and Casual Wine Bar." We've heard "Urban" invoked before; it's the culinary code word for "sophisticated . . . you know, like in big cities, where hip little restaurants pop up constantly."

NCB has everything I lust for: A creative menu long on local fish, from cobia to mullet to snapper, contemporary recipes with nods to Cuba and Italy, even a classy entree for vegetarians, distinctive house-baked bread, clever sides and knowledgeable service of both food and wine. Although not cheap, prices are manageable and way under show-off tabs elsewhere.

Plus it's an attractive space, plain, with white bistro paper on the tables, slick and clean, with glowing bits of red and blue in the lamps and candleholders and simple paintings that mimic Rothko and Haring. It feels like the music of Armstrong and Fitzgerald, sophisticated and subtle.

It's quite an achievement. These out-of-the-way rooms on Westshore have seen other efforts, and new survivors Roger and Terri Lenz have seen other rooms, dating back to '80's. Their most recent effort, New City Bistro, has pleased a big



Indigenous, indeed: New City Bistro offers pan-roasted Florida grouper with a warm saffron potato salad and Apalachicola oyster and asparagus stew.

### RESTAURANT REVIEW

#### New City Bistro

3333 S Westshore Blvd.; Tampa; Phone: (813) 805-0250

HOURS: 5:30 to 11 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday

RESERVATIONS: Recommended

DETAILS: Beer, wine served; smoking section

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: Good

PRICES: Bar menu and sandwiches, \$5.95 to \$9.95; entrees, \$11.95 to \$17.95

enough crowd (the Nibbler, too) that they decided to expand. This location on the cushy but under-served west side of the South Tampa peninsula already is drawing the neighbors. Since it's just a zip across the Gandy, it should appeal to St. Petersburg residents as well.

What you'll find is a solid menu and inventive daily specials that are good hunting for fresh finfish, plus creative ways with sides and vegetables that are prepared with care, not

just a stir-fry hurry. One night I had fresh amberjack, the Cracker salmon that gets little respect anymore. It was grilled to luscious, meaty perfection with a tart passion-fruit vinaigrette and a saute of teeny calico scallops and asparagus.

A special of Caribbean duck breast was even better, with a crisp crust lvelied up with hints of island spice on the outside, perfectly not overcooked inside, accompanied by

Please see BISTRO 41W

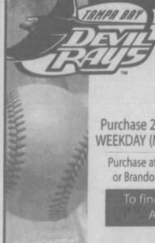
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