

Plum Oakland: Redesigning Classics

Plum Oakland transforms classic combinations into designer dishes. The impressively vegetarian-friendly restaurant has four separate menus: lunch, dinner, late night, and a weekend brunch. Among the selection on the dinner menu are chickpea fries, smoked fingerlings, basil risotto, and a lemon tart.

First up, the Chick Peas Fries. This plate is somewhere between an appetizer and an entrée. The fries are essentially redesigned falafels encircled by the in house dill yogurt sauce (tzatziki sauce). An individual chickpea fry combines the perfect amount of outer crunch with a melt-in-your-mouth interior. The Smoked Fingerlings were brought next. These little potatoes sat in three piles, each of which sat on a dollop of romesco (envision a grown-up version of fries and ketchup). Although a smoky taste lingered for a bit too long after biting into a piece of potato, the overall experience was a positive one. While every dish had been enjoyed thus far, I was missing a heartier dish. This was remedied as soon as I dug into the Basil Risotto. On top of the risotto sat a bright white parmesan foam which was then topped by a delicious parmesan crisp, which added a little crunch and elevated the overall experience of the dish. The freshly sliced parmesan that dressed the salad added a savory element to this otherwise sweet dish. The entire meal up to this point was scrumptious, but nothing compares to dessert. A single slender slice of a lemon tart bar sits on a black plate and is surrounded by little dollops of mint infused cream. A small scoop of extra virgin olive oil ice cream sits on a bed of pastry crumbs. Although this size of this dish was initially underwhelming, I was fully satisfied as I savored each bite and the hint of mint was the perfect note to end on.

Though some of the portions seemed undersized and minor issues with dishes existed, the food was, in a word, delightful. And something must be mentioned of the service. Waiters patrolled the room, constantly in search of an almost empty glass and certain not to leave a mess unattended.

The redesign of favorite comfort foods parallels the restaurant's decorum. A feeling of cool contentment quickly encompasses patrons as they are seated at communal-style dining tables. Plum transforms this style of dining into a comfortable yet intimate setting, generally saving the longer feast-style tables for smaller parties. The dark plum hues of the walls are offset by the light wood furniture and mustard yellow light fixtures that hang above patrons, bordering the rhombus-shaped dining room.

Although getting to this restaurant requires transportation, it really is only a hop, skip, and jump away from campus. This restaurant is more than likely not an everyday event for most students, as it is a bit pricey, but overall Plum offers a majestic dining experience.

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