

Taste buds truly take flight with fare at popular Pegasus

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Section: Your City

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Column: Chow Down

Source: For Your City

Where: Pegasus, 1101 14th Street S.W.

What: Some of the best Greek food you'll ever enjoy

When: Lunch, Monday to Friday,

11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Dinner, Monday to Sunday, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Smoking section: yes

Wheelchair accessible: yes, but limited seating

Prices: Appetizers from \$3.95 to \$8.25; entrees from \$13.95 to \$17.95

It had been a long and crazy day at the Herald when I rushed in, out of breath and more than 10 minutes late, to meet my friend Chad for dinner at Pegasus.

After working on the police desk all day, I still had crime on the brain and struggled to get acclimatized to my new, and very different, surroundings.

After all, going from house fires and car accidents to belly dancing and kalamata olives is not the easiest transition to make.

"Oh!" I exclaimed as the waiter materialized out of nowhere, ungracefully dropping my bag on the ground in probably just the same manner as the heroine of My Big Fat Greek Wedding would have done whenever she got flustered.

About a week before going out to dinner, Chad and I had gone to see this runaway hit movie for a second time. As we guffawed our way through it, he had a stunning revelation: Why not round out the end of a great Greek movie with some awesome Greek food?

We prided ourselves on having such an original idea until the waiter informed us that we were not the first ones to think of it, and probably not the last.

But that certainly didn't stop us from getting right into the experience of "doing Greek." While we waited for our appetizers to arrive, we were presented with a platter of zesty kalamata olives nestled in olive oil and some fragrant, crusty buns that, we were informed later, were baked in-house.

The appetizers themselves were to die for, and just a mesmerizing hint of what was to come later. For \$3.75, we got two reasonably-sized phyllo pastries containing a lip-smacking trio of baked melted cheeses; cottage, feta, and parmesan all oozing out.

Then came possibly the best calamari (\$8.25) I've ever tasted: crispy, flavourful, and light, served with a smattering of chopped-up yellow onion and a generous helping of smooth, creamy tsatsiki sauce.

Just the right amount of garlic and shredded cucumber, mixed into a base of strained yogurt, rounded out what was a wonderful accompaniment to the dish.

For our entrees, I ordered a wonderfully comforting dish of arni giouvetsi (\$13.95), or a lamb and orzo casserole with tomato, red wine and generous chunks of feta cheese gracing the top. It was fragrant and delicious, with just a touch of heat that I later found out was derived from using cinnamon cloves as well as garlic and onions.

Chad also opted for lamb; he had the arni souvla (\$15.95), a special menu item featuring a boneless leg of lamb slowly roasted on the spit for hours before being served. It came with a medley of seasonal vegetables and again, a healthy serving of tsatsiki sauce.

"Everything is very tender, especially the vegetables," said Chad thoughtfully as he carved into his lamb. "The meat is not too tender but is definitely not overcooked, which is nice because it actually gives you something to bite on."

We ended the meal -- regretfully -- with an extremely potent Irish coffee (\$4.95) and a decadent dish of chocolate mousse doused with a splash of Kahlua (\$3.50), also called sokolatina.

It took us a while to get through all the food, each of us taking slow bites because we really wanted to savour it. A belly dancer jingled and swayed through the restaurant in a sensual dance only the bravest of patrons dared to try and emulate.

The inside decor is extremely ambient and serves as a nice setting for any occasion, whether for a business lunch or going out with an old friend. It's amply decorated with murals and pictures which are pleasing to the eye and holds candles on every table.

But for those of my readers who are of the feminine persuasion, rest assured that your options for esthetic appeal are not confined to the pictures on the walls.

One need not look too carefully to find an Adonis or two lurking among the staff, which somehow seems incredibly appropriate for a Greek restaurant. Belly dancers perform every Friday and Saturday night, with the first show starting at 7 p.m. and the second at 9 p.m.