

GOOD FOOD GUIDE

Topper's Bar and Restaurant

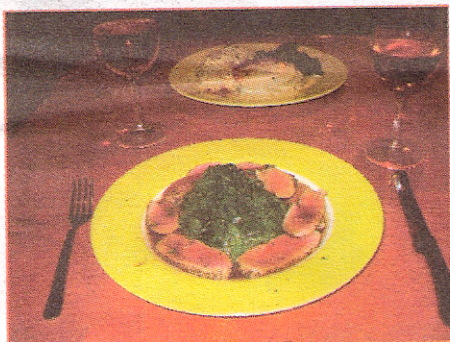
By Gary Brown

Visitors returning to St. Maarten are sure to notice that one of Simpson Bay's most popular restaurants now has a new name ... Topper's!

Topper's has taken over the 'Caribbean cottage' formally known as Bananas, and imbued it with a sparkling atmosphere and a splendid menu at reasonable prices.

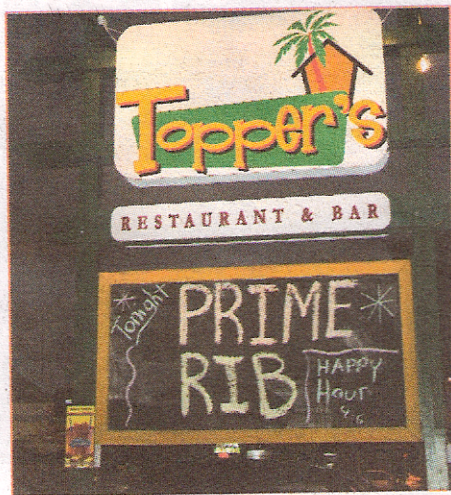
On our arrival, we were welcomed by Joanna, and led to the table by our effusive waiter Franck who took our order for drinks. At that point, I decided that should *Beachtalk* follow the habits of another publication and rate establishments from one to five then Topper's would score a six for their friendly and attractive staff.

Looking around the cozy interior, I was struck by the quality of the air. The restaurant has Caribbean style shuttered windows that catch the breeze and purge the room of cigarette smoke. That's a big plus with me and already I was enjoying myself.



I'm on a mission to cut down on my beer intake, so while Jan ordered a Heineken, I went straight to the wine. It must be said that Topper's have yet to build a wine list, however, Franck told us what was available and I was very content with a \$22 bottle of chilled Chateau La Coste Rose.

Walking in the footsteps of a restaurateur who built quite a following amongst locals and vacationers



alike must present a challenge but proprietors Topper and Melanie have done a great job. The new menu is innovative yet unfussy and includes such wonderful dishes as Tuna CV111 - sushi grade ahi tuna, flash seared, drizzled with a soy wasabi sauce served with lemon garlic spinach - which was my choice. And crab stuffed Mahi-Mahi topped with white wine cream sauce, which, says Jan, was her choice having deliberated between the New York Strip and Roast Pork.

The 'Previews' are just as interesting and, of the six on offer, we selected a delicious and generous serving of Hummos and Baba Ghanoush that arrived shortly after we ordered even though the restaurant was almost full.

A touch unusual is the presence of a live goldfish in a brandy snifter on each table. Our fish was named Olivia. I felt rather odd eating my tuna while Olivia glared, so in deference to her feelings, I pushed her

to the end of the table where I'm sure she felt more comfortable watching our neighbors eat meat.

Desserts are limited to three flavors of ice cream - strawberry, chocolate and vanilla - and the All American Apple Pie, which simply put, ranks amongst the best apple pie around.

Topper's is an easy place to have dinner - great atmosphere, good food and nice people. Our meal for two including drinks came to \$80.

Topper's is located on Welfare Road (Airport Road) Simpson Bay. Open from 11:00AM Monday - Saturday for lunch and dinner. Open Sunday from 4:00PM serving dinner only. Daily specials. Children's menu available. Kitchen closes at 10:00PM when night food (sandwiches and pasta etc.) are available. Bar open until late. For info Tel: (599) 544-3500. Email: toppers@caribserve.net or log on to: www.sxmtoppers.com

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