

January 2, 2011

MAN ABOUT TOWN**BENJAMIN STEAKHOUSE WHITE PLAINS**

610 West Hartsdale Avenue
 White Plains, NY
 914-428-6868
www.benjaminsteakhouse.com



Were you to ask me where to find a great steak in Westchester County, NY, I would start by saying there are only a handful of restaurants worth a drive-- Nick Vuli's [Flames Steakhouse](#) in Briar Cliff Manor, David Ghatanfard's [Tutta Bella Trattoria](#) in Scarsdale and Port Chester's [The Willett House](#). Beyond these three, Westchester lacks quality steakhouses. So when I heard NYC's Benjamin Steakhouse was coming up to White Plains (about a 45-minute drive from Manhattan), I must say I was intrigued. And after dining at Benjamin this past week, I am pleased to say, my small list of great steak houses is

beginning to grow.

Owner Benjamin Prelvukaj started his career in Brooklyn at the legendary Peter Luger's steak house, where he clearly honed his skills as a restaurateur and developed a keen eye for obtaining the best beef available. Benjamin opened his first namesake restaurant in Manhattan, located on East 41st, between Madison and Park Avenue, and, just recently, in Westchester's most dynamic city, White Plains, taking over the space previously occupied by Mighty Joe Young's. While I dined at Benjamin, it was evident that Prelvukaj and cast have already found their groove, serving some of the best USDA Prime steaks I've tasted in a long time, comparable to those found at Michael Lomanaco's [Porter House](#) and the famous [Ben Benson's](#) in NYC.

Benjamin has a typical steak house design: white walls and ceilings with a thin wood trim, dark brown leather chairs, polished wood floors, and a grand fireplace guests can dine beside while receiving terrific service by an all-male wait staff dressed in white shirts and black bow ties. Upon entering the restaurant, all guests are greeted by Benjamin's gorgeous hostess, [Linda Liolla](#), who was recently chosen as *Esquire's* hostess of the week.

Sitting directly in front of the fireplace, I enjoyed a perfectly made Manhattan cocktail while my beautiful date Angela sipped a tall glass of Prosecco. For starters, the crab cakes come two on a plate, made with large chunks of lump crab meat; shrimp cocktail, served with either four or six shrimp, sided by a house-made cocktail sauce spiked with horseradish and spice; a lush strip of juicy Canadian bacon; and a creamy lobster bisque soup, full of flavor and generous in size, but lacking lobster chunks, any if at all.

In between courses, I ordered a nice bottle of Carneros pinot noir wine from Benjamin's impressive wine list,



offering varietals from almost every corner of the earth, with prices that go from affordable to very expensive. The wines themselves are stored within an elegant glass wine room (*left*) directly across from the restaurant's bustling bar, by designer Emilio Escaladas.

Executive chef Arturo McLeod has been with Benjamin for many years and the two work in a harmonious tandem, as the front and back of the house run as efficiently as a steak house needs to be.

The steaks come from [Strassburger Meats](#) and are the obvious highlight of Benjamin's menu, thick, well-fatted cuts of USDA Prime beef. We ordered the porterhouse for two (*above*), which, in the

style set long ago by Luger's, came on a sizzling hot oval plate, the meat seared just right on the outside and medium-rare on the inside. For sides, we shared the thick crispy steak fries, an order of the creamed spinach (a bit salty that night), and a plate of sautéed mushrooms mixed with chopped garlic, all large enough for a party of four.

For dessert, the tiramisù and chocolate cake were accompanied by whipped cream; both stand an imposing three to four inches tall.

Benjamin Steakhouse may be the new guy on the block here in Westchester County, but from what I saw of the packed house on a Tuesday night, it's quickly becoming a favorite among locals and those who have heard about a great new steak house north of Manhattan.

Benjamin is open for lunch Tues.-Fri, and for dinner Tues.-Sun. Appetizers \$9.94-\$23.95, Entrees \$32.95-\$41.95.