



Revolution owner Dean Scanlon has revolutionized his restaurant. Here he stands by the ghost soldiers painted in the entranceway. PROVIDENCE JOURNAL PHOTOS/KRIS CRAIG

REVOLUTION

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in Providence-area kitchens more than 30 years ago, and then gained some classical training while working for a few years at restaurants in Birmingham, Ala.

Then he came back to his native state and started L'attitude, which opened in 1999. It was labeled a "modern eatery" and the menu was composed of dishes drawn from many ethnic cuisines. At that time, Pawtuxet Village was just getting energized and there were few restaurants. In the course of L'attitude's 15-year tenure, all of that changed and Scanlon said he wanted to carve out a narrower niche.

Revolution was the product of that rebranding, and the redecorated space celebrated its grand opening on Halloween of last year. The interior now reflects the patriotic theme, in homage to the burning of HMS Gaspee, an English customs schooner off the coast of Warwick, on June 9, 1772. As it occurred more than a year before the Boston Tea Party, many Rhode Islanders take pride that the event was truly the start of the Revolutionary War.

A schooner surrounded by stars dominates the red, white and blue mural on the long wall of the dining room. There are two distinct seating areas; the one in the back contains about 40 seats at well-spaced tables covered with tablecloths, while another area features high, bare-wood tables matching the warm tones of the floor. They seem to act as a bridge between the dining room and the bar. The tables have real roses in bud vases, and the salt and pepper shakers are actually spice grinders. Bravo for that choice.

The appetizers are called "snacks" on the menu, but the portion size at Revolution is incredibly generous. My companion's panko-crusted cod cakes were a trio of cakes that were almost solid with well-seasoned ground fish. There was a small amount of heat in

Bill of Fare:

A dinner for two at Revolution might look like this:
 2 glasses of wine: \$16.25
 Cod Cakes: \$8
 Shrimp Scampi Toast: \$12
 Baby Spinach Salad: \$7.25
 Chicken Milanese: \$17
 Shrimp Jambalaya: \$20

Total: \$80.50
Tax: \$6.44
Tip: \$16.00
Total bill: \$102.94

Details

■ Revolution Restaurant and Bar, 2190 Broad St., Cranston, (401) 780-8700, www.revolutionri.net. Casual. Street parking. Reservations accepted. Accessible to wheelchairs. AE, MC and V.

■ Open Sunday to Thursday from noon to midnight, Friday and Saturday from noon to 1 a.m.

■ Appetizers and salads, \$7.25 to \$12; sandwiches, burgers and pizza, \$9 to \$15; entrees, \$16 to \$24. Full bar.

the pepper beurre blanc sauce that balanced the silkiness of the fish.

I was intrigued with the concept of the shrimp scampi toast, and it was a great variation on bruschetta. Thin slices of artisan bread were nicely toasted, so they served to absorb the wonderfully flavored butter sauce napping the perfectly cooked shrimp. Drizzled on top of the shrimp and red peppers was a lime crème fraîche dotted with slivers of aromatic fresh basil.

Other options include calamari done "Rhode Island-style" and a salad of black truffle burrata with heirloom tomatoes, or you can get options from the raw bar, including chowder. If you're more in the mood for bar food to share around, there's spinach artichoke dip, a few options for sauce on chicken wings, and a selection of pizzas and bruschetta.

Not realizing how large the portions would be, we had decided to split a Baby Spinach



Shrimp Scampi Toast, foreground, is dotted with lime creme fraiche. In the background, Baby Spinach Salad includes sautéed portobello mushrooms and roasted red peppers interspersed with ample nuggets of goat cheese.

Salad following the appetizers. The highlight of the salad was an abundance of sautéed portobello mushrooms and roasted red peppers interspersed with ample nuggets of goat cheese.

Shrimp jambalaya was my companion's entrée choice. This kitchen makes the sauce and then offers the option of having it on pasta rather than with traditional rice. Like all of the dishes we sampled at Revolution, the jambalaya was perfectly seasoned and the sauce was straight out of the bayous in terms of flavors and texture.

My choice was chicken Milanese that turned out to be two tender cutlets in a silky lemon and garlicky pan sauce with wild mushrooms. One of my few quibbles is that all of the entrees are served with the vegetable du jour; in this case, it was roasted Brussels sprouts. While it harmonized with the chicken, I don't think it would have paired well with other options with which it was served, including grilled salmon with tomato and basil relish, or blackened swordfish with mandarin orange salsa and scallion rice.

For those wishing lighter fare, a whole list of sandwiches and wraps in addition to burgers is available.

While Scanlon said that an imaginative list of signature drinks is in the works, and will tie to the theme of the original 13 Colonies, there is a large and modestly priced list of wines available by the glass, including sparkling wine, as well as many beers and a full bar.

Even though the restaurant was crowded, the service was efficient and friendly. We were worried at first because the server did not write anything down as we were ordering, including substituting a sherry vinaigrette for the raspberry vinaigrette listed with the salad. But our fears were unfounded and all dishes emerged as ordered promptly and were delivered to the correct person.

The server, however, should have written down that there was a special that evening. We were told there was none and then a very interesting plate with fish and clams was delivered to the next table. The diners told us it was the daily special.

Scanlon has many

promotions to lure diners. From 3 to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday is "buck-a-shuck" time for oysters, littlenecks and shrimp; from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, all of the burgers are reduced to \$6. There's a trivia game on Tuesday night and live music every Wednesday.

While there's always room for more loyal customers, Revolution seemed on the evening we dined to be full of repeat customers. There were a lot of air kisses and shoulder pats swapped as diners were escorted past tables filled with their friends. But we newcomers were treated just as well as the "regulars," and quality food that presents this level of value is certainly worth return visits.

— Providence resident Ellen Brown, the founding food editor of USA Today, has reviewed hundreds of restaurants in her 40-year career in food journalism. She is the author of more than 40 cookbooks, including "Soup of the Day" (Running Press, 2014) and "The New Cast Iron Skillet Cookbook" (Sterling Epicure, 2014). Write to her at cost.buster.cooking@gmail.com.