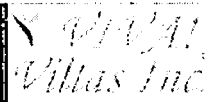
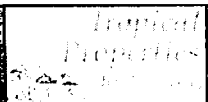


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@Work: Café Concordia

by Lynda Lohr

March 6, 2009 -- It's a bit of a drive to Café Concordia, located out near Salt Pond at Concordia Eco-tents and Condominiums, but it's worth the trip for the stellar food and fabulous view.

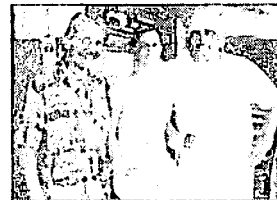
"Every day it's a new menu," head chef Elizabeth Muro said.

She described the food as "very clean," with an emphasis on simplicity and dishes tasting the way they were intended.

"If it's squash," she said, "it should taste like squash."

In late February, Muro and sous chef Chris Reynoso conjured up such dishes as a baked chicken breast with roasted fennel and summer squash; a fishermen's platter with shrimp, mussels, scallops, conch, and squid; and a brown rice stir fry with fennel, peppers, onions, green beans, and an Asian green called tai soi.

(Click for rest of article)



Manager Joe Feraco, head chef Elizabeth Muro and sous chef Chris Reynoso.

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Restaurant manager Joe Feraco pointed out that there are always chicken, steak, fish, and vegetarian entrees on the menu. "There are eight different entrees each night," he aid.

Café Concordia also features what it calls Little Bites. They start with flatbreads that include toppings such as smoked gouda, fig and toasted almonds and cauliflower, tomato and nicoise olives. Or try the French bread with a dipping sauce like hummus, artichoke and white bean with roasted garlic.

Desserts are equally imaginative, like a key lime pudding cake topped with blueberries or a vanilla bean crème brulee.

On an island with high restaurant prices, Café Concordia shines for its reasonable cost. Entrees run \$16 to \$22, and the Little Bites, \$8 to \$14.

Café Concordia also has an extensive salad bar that runs \$6 for a small portion and \$12 for a large.

At these prices, you can forgo wait service and won't have to tip, which is another savings. Instead, give your order at the bar and someone delivers it to your table.

The views of the sea and hills at this remote St. John location are lovely and provide the backdrop for the food.

There are always challenges when it comes to supply, Muro said. She said she cooks what's on hand rather than setting her menu in advance. Muro relies on fresh herbs and vegetables grown in Coral Bay by Josephine Roller.

True to form, Muro said, "Her tomatoes taste like tomatoes."

And while she'd like to use ingredients grown close to St. John, that's not always possible.

Muro and Reynoso are both graduates of prestigious cooking schools. Muro went to the Scottsdale Culinary Institute in Scottsdale, Arizona. Reynoso attended the California School of Culinary Arts in Pasadena.

While school gave Muro the "toolbox" for her future as a chef, she said she got more out of working in a kitchen day to day than she did in school.

Café Concordia is open Tuesday through Saturday. Happy hour runs 4:30 to 6 p.m., with dinner from 6 p.m. through 8:30 p.m.

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