

# ARTS

## La Cave delights

BY ROD MACDONALD

**A**S A PERSON WHO has known a number of excellent chefs both professional and amateur, I feel that the best opinion is always your own. There are always people who will tell you what you should like. I'm going to tell you what I like and hope that I can raise either your curiosity or your ire enough to get your attention.

La Cave is nestled in a small alley way on the corner of Blowers and Grafton Streets. This puts it

*A place to indulge, not to sample*

firmly within reach of much of Halifax, especially downtown.

This is not a fast food restaurant. Some say the service is slow but for me this is a place to relax with Friends, not a place to dine and dash. A place to indulge, not to sample. Approached from this perspective, the service is fine.

La Cave has an informal atmosphere. It is a rather dark place with winding halls and a low ceiling offering a number of small "caves" as an intimate alternative. The music includes jazz, Windham Hill, classical and pop. There is also a jazz guitar duet which adds to the mood appreciably.

The menu has changed over time but consistently offers variety and flavour. A couple can enjoy a quality meal, including appetizers and a drink for about \$40.

The appetizers include among others, the best Caesar salad in town. This Caesar is not for the faint hearted; it even comes with anchovies, if you like. The garlic bread may be small but it is soaked in garlic and melted cheese. I should mention that La Cave oozes with garlic. I love this rich and aromatic herb and this is the place for it. There is a delicious French onion soup with French bread and cheese bubbling over the way it should. Mussels are also available and unfortunately, are as over-priced as in most restaurants.

The entrées at La Cave never fail to satisfy. The meatballs come in a sweet and sour sauce which is not overdone but lends a subtlety to the flavour of the very finely ground meat. They are served with rice and a Caesar.

One of the easiest foods to overcook and destroy, fresh fish is a real treat in the hands of a caring chef. At La Cave, the sole is superb. It is baked so as to maintain its texture and they don't smother it in butter. It comes with rice pilau and steamed broccoli.

The baked brie is also worth trying, as an appetizer for two or as an entrée. It is served alongside a generous selection of apples, grapes,



Dal Photo: Angel Figueroa

*Disco is really and truly dead*

kiwi, melon and other fruit with French bread.

The pepper steak is served in a cognac sauce. They always manage to cook it medium rare as I like it. One of the only places to do so. It is served with rice pilau and broccoli. By the way the rice is very rich and tastes wonderful and the broccoli is steamed beautifully so that it does not lose its colour or texture. Other entrées include Chicken Kiev, rib steaks, sand-

wiches, bagels, burgers and more.

La Cave is known for cheesecake, of which the owner has been called "King". The varieties offered mostly involve themes on fruit and chocolate. The Hungarian, with Tia Maria and raisins, and the Pumpkin are excellent. I am told that the cheesecake at La Cave sometimes appears dry though, as if it had been frozen.

I am much more interested in the brownies. It reads quite unob-

trusively on the menu, not sounding exotic or alluring. However, the Brownie Delight is sublime. A large chocolate fudge brownie is heated and topped with vanilla ice cream and a splash of Tia Maria. Sounds simple, but it's decadent.

La Cave is fully licensed offering wine, beer, spirits and special coffees. It is open for dinner only Tuesday through Sunday and open to 4 am on Fridays and Saturdays.

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