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RIDE ON



MARKET FORCES

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SPEAKER ON THE RECORD

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WITCH WAY WILL YOU GO?

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HE'S GOT THE BEAT

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FOODFINDS

Winner steaks all

Cactus Creek Prime Steakhouse
Bonanza Casino, 4720 N. Virginia St., 334-5555

The chef at **Cactus Creek Prime Steakhouse** is
by
Dave Preston

Adam Omellas, originally from San Jose, and he's got two things going for him—he's not afraid to take a chance and his passion for food. His mentor was Chef Almir Da Fonseca, Brazilian-born, classically trained in Europe and an instructor at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in St. Helena. Molecular gastronomy (MG) blends physics and chemistry to transform the tastes and textures of food. The result is a new and innovative dining experience for your palate. Omellas is an MG-er—and some of his food is most compelling.

than four decades, his name has been synonymous with outstanding service and impeccable wine gravitas. The wine list offers 105 selections (\$15-\$295), well balanced in varietals and price. There are 21 wines-by-the-glass (\$5-\$9).

His selection is a French Sauvignon Blanc (\$9) with a brilliant, pale straw gold color and a translucent rim. Fresh, clean and youthful with delicate nuances of lime, grapefruit, green apple and kiwi.

Tasty Bones (\$9) appeared next—herbed roasted split bone marrow, Stilton cheese, hedgehog mushroom bacon relish, horseradish parsley, and house crostinis. It was savory, with a nice kicker, and the cheese is known for its characteristic strong smell and taste. My second wine was 2012 Talbott Sleepy Hollow Pinot Noir from the Santa Lucia Highlands of Central Coast California. It's full-bodied, with a rich texture and flavors of Bing cherry and red plum, leading to a long finish with vanilla oak and lively acidity.

My entrée was the hanger steak braciolo (\$28), with a new twist and a whole lot more going on than just meat. First, a hanger steak is known as "butcher's steak" because butchers would often keep it for themselves rather than offer it for sale because it's so good. Rolled in the meat is a Capicola ham—Italian-style dry, cured pork shoulder—sitting atop a prawn, pistachio, Carolina gold rice, chorizo, and Shiitake and Porcini mushrooms, drizzled with a Burgundy reduction. The meat melted in my mouth, and the flavors and textures. Even the crunchy nuts stood out.

This almost regal dish called for a noble wine; Los Vascos Grande Reserve (\$8) from Chile, now owned by Domaines Barons de Rothschild-Lafite, is a blend consisting mainly of Cabernet Sauvignon. This wine is characterized by the complexity and persistence of its bouquet of cherries and blackcurrants (Cabernet Sauvignon), strawberries (Malbec), raspberries (Syrah) and plums, with notes of bay leaves and black pepper (Carmenère).

For a sampling of the creative desserts, I had Kentucky Bourbon Pecan pie (\$7) with Calypso Rum reduction dusted with peanut butter powder and graced with fresh blackberries. The O! South meets a millennium gastronomic masterpiece, and I'm not whistlin' Dixie. □



PHOTO: ALIUSON YOUNG

Chef Adam Omellas preparing a new menu item, Tempura Crusted USDA Prime Rib Appetizer.

First, I had a warm "roll" (\$11) of flavors, textures and eye appeal soon to appear on the fall menu. There was BBQ fresh-water eel and thinly cut USDA prime rib encasing shaved corn with Ponzu basil oil (a Japanese, tart, dark, citrus-based liquid) and Ranchero ginger wasabi. Atop it were micro greens, and then a house-made pickled cabbage and fanned avocados. Add a little MG, lime bubbles, and that's how the chef got my attention. So much going on in the way of flavors and textures—savory to a nip of heat to a sweet to offset the salty.

CC is fortunate to have a true gentleman of wine, Alan Gregoire, at the front-of-the-house. For more

To learn more, visit www.bonanzacasino.com/cactus-creek-prime-steakhouse.