

# The Nittany

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# Epicurean

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Wednesday, February 19, 2014

## Tempo - Buffalo Fine Dining at Its Best

With four children, we're on a strict budget in our household. That doesn't stop us from checking out some of the best dining Western New York has to offer, but it does mean that we don't do "fine dining" frequently. To be clear, while the food at many restaurants meets the "fine dining" level, when I think "fine dining", I'm thinking white table cloths and service that's efficient, attentive and professional. The wine lists are comprehensive and well-made. The menus are well constructed, appetizing and often pricier than most. It's a top-notch culinary experience and for the most part, you get what you pay for.

There are several restaurants that I would put into that category in Western New York and they offer some of the best culinary experiences in the area. We traveled to one of those places just this past weekend - Tempo Restaurant.

I've been to Tempo a few times before and each time was a memorable experience. This past weekend was no different. Tempo offers "contemporary cuisine" with a distinctly Italian theme. We arrived early and were able to enjoy a drink at the small, but well-stocked bar. Sipping on Blanton's Original Single Barrel Bourbon was a great way to start the evening and to spend the time while we waited for our family to arrive. Once everyone had arrived and had a chance to enjoy a libation, we were seated right on time.

It took a while to reach decisions on both wine and our meals. The wine list is quite lengthy with many selections by the glass and/or bottle from winemaking regions around the world. Other than a few Herman J. Wiemer rieslings, there were no local wine selections. That's a problem that should be remedied, but it's a discussion for another time. Nonetheless, we were able to select a great bottle of red wine, which I'll get to shortly.

For our dining options, we could choose from the winter menu featuring appetizers, salads, *Primi* and *Secondi*. The specials list for the evening was broken down into three categories with some overlap - *Antipasti*, *Secondi* and *Bistecca*. Ultimately, my mother chose the *Mussels con Finocchio* (\$16) for the table to share, to be followed by the *Insalata Mista* (\$9.50) and the *Ossobuco con Gnocchi* (\$54). My sister, Beth, selected an *antipasto* from the specials - Seared Scallops and Pork Belly (\$16) to be followed by the *Ossobuco*. Brooke selected another *antipasto* from the specials list - Bacon Wrapped Rabbit Saddle (\$14) and followed that up with Venison Stuffed Quail (\$36). My wife also

selected the Scallops and followed that up with a *Secondo* from the specials list - Pan Seared Halibut (\$38). My father started with the *Insalata Mista* and followed it with a selection from the menu - *Prosciutto* Wrapped Filet Mignon (\$54). I started with the Rabbit Saddle and then went with the Quail - exactly like Brooke.

After we placed our order, we selected this red from *Sicilia* made from an indigenous varietals:



*2007 Cerasuolo Di Vittoria Classico from Cantina Valle dell'Acate (Bidini, Sicilia).*

*Cerasuolo Di Vittoria Classico* is a blend of *Nero d'Avola* and *Frappato*. This wine was full bodied and well structured. It featured deep, dark fruit like blackberries, prunes and dates. It was a delicious accompaniment to the Quail which I'll tell you about shortly.