

Creole Charm

BY E.C. GLADSTONE Photos by Sabin Orr Bayou cuisine won't leave you blue



Chilean sea bass



VooDoo Steak
Rio, 5-11 p.m. daily.
702.777.7923

Strawberry cheesecake



Ménage à trois

IMAGINE DINING INSIDE A SANTERIA STORE—OR EVEN WITHIN THE FEVER DREAM OF A VOODOO PRIESTESS—AND YOU CAN CONJURE THE VIBE OF VOODOO STEAK, THE RIO'S CLUB-CONNECTED SPOOKY SUPPER SPOT. SEEKING THE PERFECT PLACE TO SPARK THE SPIRITS FOR A HAPPENING HALLOWEEN? THIS IS IT.

Set on the 50th floor, with stunning, purple-tinted views in every direction, VooDoo is a funky feast for the eyes, with black-lit totems and talismans everywhere, contrasting animal print furniture and psychedelic glasswork synthesizing your senses.

Prepared for a powerful potion? I hope so, because the ice-fog shrouded Witch Doctor, a fishbowl filled with four rums and more, has got the goods. Or maybe the Tropical Trance is your style, a concoction of mango, peach and banana liqueurs. Then there are the Grand Hypnosis, the Sexual Trance, Silk Chocolate, Mojo Juice ... but hey, what's in a name?

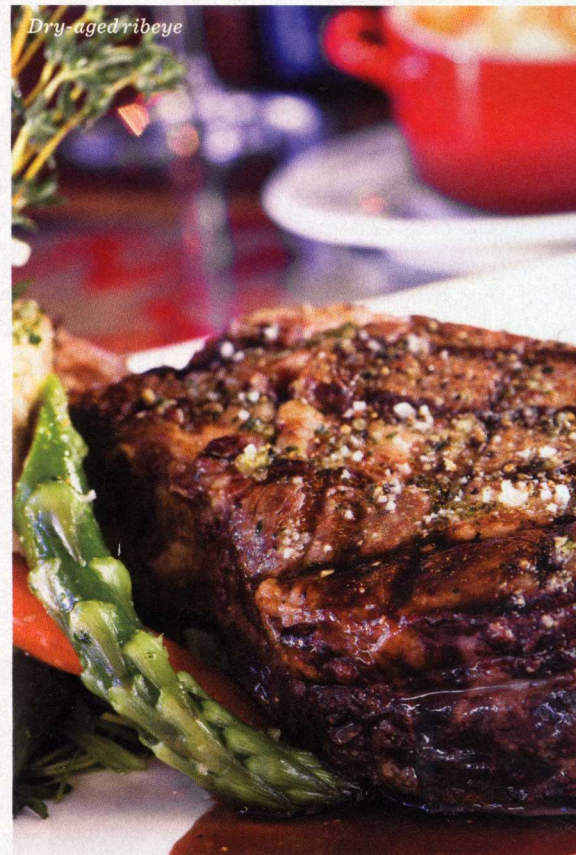
VooDoo does not play around so much when it comes to the food, although you can take different routes depending on mood. In one direction is classic steakhouse fare: jumbo crab cakes, heirloom tomato salad, lobster Thermidor, rack of lamb and cuts of Wagyu (aka Kobe) and dry-aged domestic beef.

In the other direction are Cajun-creole inspired creations like Delta frogs legs and mussels, coconut and sugarcane shrimp, seafood jambalaya with linguine, gumbo and more (nearly everything has a little bit of lagniappe).

For the indecisive, VooDoo also offers a Bayou Seafood Platter (Maine lobster, Fanny Bay oysters, shrimp and king crab), a Witch Doctor Sampler (crab, shrimp, beignets and hush puppies) and while many places have a surf and turf supper, VooDoo kicks it up a notch with a signature ménage à trois (filet, lobster and prawns).

We decided to try a little of all, starting on some savory tasso ham and andouille-flavored beignet bites, with a piquant pepper jack dipping sauce. Then came rich lobster bisque, strongly spiked with apple brandy and studded with tender meat. A Chilean sea bass, cooked in cast iron, and the 20-ounce dry-aged ribeye were both impressive portions, but size wasn't all that mattered. The delicate, buttery fish was seared into a substantial slab while the juicy, flavorful beef was finished with herbs and a subtle wine reduction and accompanied by a marrow bone—manna for meat lovers. A side of truffled mac and cheese, delightfully decadent elbows in a creamy, earthy sauce, was balanced by a care-filled mélange of organic baby vegetables.

Although tempted by the cheesecake, to finish with a dramatic flair, we chose the bananas Foster. Flambéed tableside, with rich butter pecan ice cream grounding the caramelized crust, its spirited sweetness is as N'awlinian as you can imagine.



Dry-aged ribeye