

AKA wine bar

by *Kathy Richardier*

dine out

Muse and Winebar Kensington are two places where the food has seduced us because it is always tasty and adventurous. Muse is the parent, Winebar Kensington is the first of two siblings. The second sibling is AKA Wine Bar. AKA (“also known as,” if that isn’t obvious) recently moved into what was formerly Noon restaurant on Edmonton Trail, across from Diner Deluxe. At the helm are owners Chris Hurlburt; Cam Dobranski, one of the city’s most creative chefs; and Norm Zilm, a former owner at Noon.

Besides dinner, AKA offers weekend brunch between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. On the Saturday The Man and I arrived, we could see that this is a meal that has hit its stride. Go early or, perhaps, late. There are no resos, and by about 11 a.m., most tables were filled and the biz was non-stop after that. There is good reason for this.

We do like our weekend brunching, and AKA’s offerings are right up there at the top. There is not a thing on the short and sweet menu that would not issue

“The recession gives you a reason to drink on a Saturday morning,” The Man said, as if anyone needs a reason to drink sparkles on a weekend morn.

Leaving aside thoughts of a liquid brunch, we contemplated the menu. On a previous brunch visit, we’d had Grandad’s grilled cheese sandwich, stuffed with ham, oozing brie, and topped with tomatoes (\$12). Apparently grandpa couldn’t cook, but he could make a killer grilled cheese. This time, it was the familiarity of eggs Bennie and waffles. You think you know eggs Benedict, but you know nothing. AKA’s Bennies deliver “English muffins” of house-made brioche, crisply toasted, topped with Broek Pork Acres’ (near Lethbridge) grilled farmer’s sausage (or bacon, pork belly or house-cured gravlax), perfectly poached eggs, grilled tomato and sleek, silky hollandaise (\$13). The hash browns are perfectly browned and crispy-edged.

Quinoa waffles are topped with fruit butter, maple syrup and a rasher of more good Broek Pork bacon. These generous dishes were more than enough food, but we couldn’t stop. We had to order a side of the house-cured pork belly, sliced thick, fried to a crisp succulence, dipped (or not) in house-made ketchup and strawberry-pineapple jam—ahhhhhhhhhhh (\$5). Talk about Saturday morning palate sex.

You could have french toast with brie, a wine-poached pear-and-pomegranate syrup, a truffled omelette or even something light like toasted biscuits, preserves and fruit salad. You can also order sides of mushrooms, grilled tomatoes, yogurt and granola or, better yet, sausages or bacon. Just don’t forget to order the side of pork belly. Good food (and lots of it), good prices, good morning. What’s not to like? **S**

AKA Wine Bar, 709 Edmonton Tr. N.E., 403-984-7534.

These Little Piggies

Allan and Joanne Vanden Broek, along with their nine kids, raise Berkshire pigs on pastures (not in barns) at their farm north of Lethbridge. They sell a variety of products to high-end restaurants and directly to consumers. For more information, visit broekporkacres.com.

a happy wake-up call to your palate and make it say, “Mmmmm, yum.” It’s satisfying Saturday or Sunday morning palate sex, if I may be so bold.

We started the meal off right with a recession-redeeming mimosa, sparkling wine and orange juice.



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