

Fia Steak

By **Magnolia Lafleur** - February 24, 2022



Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

By **MAGNOLIA LAFLEUR** | *Reporter*

In these unpredictable times, it has become harder to find restaurants that still maintain an inviting atmosphere centered around the experience of eating—until now. Fia Steak might just be one of the hottest restaurants to open on the Westside.

From owner and restaurateur Micheal Greco and Chef Brendan Collins, Fia Steak is connected to their local and coastal-inspired Fia Restaurant in Santa Monica.

The two make a great team—Collins, who was born and raised in Nottingham, England, offers his European hospitality and a love for putting his own touch to each dish. He has worked for many

years with Greco, who has 30 years of experience working in restaurants and nightclubs. Greco said he created Fia Steak as an homage to the classic steakhouses in his hometown, New York City.

Upon being seated, patrons are met with a wonderful aroma of delicately prepared food from their open-air kitchen and a selection of the best songs from the 70s, 80s and 90s—which flood the heart with nostalgia and ever so present excitement.

A delightful experience, customers are offered the comforting taste of authentic cuisine inside an atmosphere of tangible romance, presenting a culminating affair of culinary perfection where unpredictability lies in the excitement of re-discovering one's own taste buds.

Fia Steak is nestled on the side of its sister restaurant Fia, in an intimate space that feels like you have your own private dining experience. Warm amber lighting brings a sense of romance to the room, like being in front of a fireplace. The room is arranged with modular seating that allows for a party of one, or groups of up to 24, to dine comfortably in beautiful, classic leather booths.

Designed with meticulous detail, Fia Steak manages to provide an international decadent experience with a bar countertop made of Carrara marble from Italy and a gold leaf ceiling.

Sitting in a booth right next to the kitchen, centered around a custom-made, antique-style wooden island, and reflective hanging Ruffoni Copper Pots, one is treated with a view of Chef Collins passionately stirring up the most delectable dishes on the Westside. Original artistic pictures line the walls, as well as stained glass art pieces.

The staff at Fia Steak were incredibly kind, attentive and eager to give every patron, what felt like, a personalized “make yourself at home” experience. Director of Operations Rick Lang, a Southern California native from San Diego with 30 years in the fine dining and wine industry, has set the tone like a conductor, to a perfectly sounding, tasting and feeling orchestra, where every staff member genuinely seems to enjoy food, their jobs and the people they serve.

“I love our chef’s masterful work and professional team the most,” Lang shared with the *Palisadian-Post*. “His cuisine and art are the things one cannot find anywhere else.”

When visiting, the first thing you are given—aside from impeccable hospitality—are five types of breads: plain ciabatta, olive ciabatta, red pepper and sweet onion ciabatta, plain baguette and a whole-wheat baguette with walnuts and dried cranberries.

These tasty, crunchy breads are paired with shaved salt and *Beurre de Baratte*—butter from Normandy, France—and a savory steak dripping sauce they call *Beef Jelly*.

A potpourri of flavors, it's more than just table bread and butter, it's an opening act that excites the tongue of what's to come.

Followed by the bread, one is treated to a complimentary, small plate from Chef Collins, of *Amuse Bouche*—French for “mouth amusement”—composed of *Ravioli Carbonara* with house-cured Guanciale (pig cheeks or jowls), a most delectable way to prepare the pallet.

The *Tableside Baby Gem Caesar Salad* with grilled chicken looked like a garden in winter with shavings of real Parmigiano Reggiano cheese atop a bed of lettuce, served with a dressing made of imported white anchovies, lemon, a whole raw pasteurized egg and dijon mustard, and in-house croutons. This salad provided the perfect balance of being able to enjoy and actually taste the lettuce, while enjoying the dressing, neither of which overwhelmed the other, but were a perfect complement of health and taste.

Bartender and writer Dustin Kerns, whose musical playlist aided in creating the most gleeful and nostalgic of experiences, also whipped up the most delectable cocktails. His *Grapes of Wrath* cocktail—a nod to the novel by John Steinbeck—made from freshly squeezed grapes and a vibrant tasting gin called Empress, went down smoothly, letting the tongue linger in the vibrancy of the taste.

The second cocktail *Cervantes*—a nod to the novel by Miguel de Cervantes—was equally up to the mark, made with homemade, fresh spicy lime juice and an exemplary mezcal, it left one beckoning for more.

I strongly recommend getting the *Chilean Sea Bass* with choron sauce and grilled lemon, a soft and perfectly made fish upon creamy Thai green curry with kaffir lime and lemongrass. A subtle taste, whose dressing worked as the perfect partnership.

The 2016 Mt. Brave Cabernet, from Mt. Veeder in Napa Valley by the famous winemaker Chris Carpenter, was perfectly paired with a plate of beguiling, soft tasting *Dauphinoise Potatoes* swirled with double cream and sprinkles of thyme, rosemary, chives and a *30-Day, Dry-Aged Ribeye* steak with *Bearnaise Sauce*.

The crescendo, in an already spectacular assortment of delicately prepared food, was the steak. Prepared over a Santa Maria style grill using mesquite wood, the steak was perfectly cooked and textured, giving water to the mouth with each tender, juicy, soft yet firm, chewy and succulent bite.

The punctuation at the end of the meal was a sweet dessert, the *Passion and Coconut Trifle* with mango mousse and basil ice cream. The taste acted as the perfect exclamation to a meal well enjoyed.

What was most perfect and distinct about Fia Steak (besides everything) was the perfect amount of serving sizes per meal and the fact that you could actually taste the food.

When fine dining, the dressing on the food can be overwhelming or underwhelming at times. Here it was neither, it was a perfect blend, like old-fashioned, home-cooking straight from the farm to your plate, yet in the most lavish of settings.

It was refreshing to actually enjoy the taste of healthy food, with a dressing that accented and lifted every bite.

Chef Collins' style of cooking allows one to taste all the very best flavors that are born from food that is homegrown in nature, mixed with the luxurious refinement of drizzled spices and dressings. Fia Steak takes one out of the ordinary and into a welcoming yet lush environment that is sure to become one of LA's best kept secrets.