

Agenda Magazine – Winter 2009

Marilyn Anderson & Dennis Lanning's **ROMANCE ON THE ROAD**

LUMINARIA

Inn and Spa at Loretto
211 Old Santa Fe Trail Santa Fe, New Mexico
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<http://www.innatloretto.com/new-mexico-dining/santa-fe-dining.php>



Luminaria is the restaurant located in the **Inn and Spa at Loretto**. The décor is Contemporary American with modern western accents and dozens of large hurricane luminaries and candles, as well as a large kiva fireplace. The design elements are based on the ancient history, traditions, arts and crafts of the Anasazi and their ancestors, the Northern Pueblo people, but with a contemporary edge.

The menu has a Southwestern theme with tamales, enchiladas and such. Since we generally aren't lovers of Mexican-type fare (we hate cilantro), we weren't expecting to really like the food. But we were 100% wrong. The food was absolutely dee-lish, with a capital D. That's thanks to Chef Brian Cooper who has developed a menu of contemporary American selections with Southwest influences made from farm fresh and organic foods that feature creative, bold flavors designed to ignite the senses.

As an appetizer, Marilyn got one of their signature dishes, the Confit Duck Tamale, which tasted sweet and wonderful. It was made with truffle oil, which gave it an extra sweetness. And the duck was tender and succulent.

The entrees came and were perfect. Another of their signature dishes, the artful Scallops Wrapped with Spanish Chorizo on a bed of Lemon Spaetzle was served with Wilted Arugula and Sweet Corn. The scallops were sweet and tender and there were just enough so you didn't feel over-stuffed after the meal.

Our other entrée, the Ruby Trout, was a huge piece, and it was a scrumptious surprise with crispy, yet juicy skin, totally wonderful. The fish rested on a bed of the best Mixed Grains dotted with Beans and Cranberries. The Brussel Sprouts with Ham were good, not great, but the grains made the dish truly special.

And the desserts! We were in "sugar high" heaven. One of their dessert specialties is donuts. Against my protestations, the waitress gave us recommendations and smiled as she brought us the freshly-baked mini-donuts made from corn... in a little white bakery bag to keep them hot. On the side

were 3 dipping sauces: chocolate fudge, butterscotch caramel, and apple spice. Dennis hit the chocolate and I hit the caramel. And didn't want to stop! Truly, they were orgasmic.

But alas, another dessert loomed in front of us. After tasting the donuts, I didn't even want to *try* the other dessert, thinking it would just be a disappointment. But again, WRONG. The Anjou Pears Brown Betty was another heavenly treat. Usually served with clove ice cream, we opted instead for vanilla. The pears were sliced very thin, drizzled with just a tad of crumbs as well as with brown sugar and cinnamon, and served with the ice cream on top, all in a mini-iron-skillet. Sweet, warm and OMG... oh-so-good!

We couldn't take any of the Brown Betty home, because we finished it all. So two very happy but very sated people went back to our hotel happy and full... and with a bag of a few leftover mini-donuts to snack on yet another time. Mmmmm, yummy!

In addition to the main dining room, Luminaria's outdoor patio dining offers views of the historic Loretto Chapel and town, which gives your dining experience the true feel and spirit of Santa Fe.

The restaurant features an Early Evening Menu from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm, when you can enjoy Chef Cooper's fabulous cuisine at special reduced prices.

Overall, Luminaria is a romantic and comfortable place where your meal isn't just a meal; it's a culinary experience you're certain to savor. Hmmm, I'm wondering if you can order their donuts online? I think not, so we'll just have to go back again! We'll look for you there.

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