

At VG Bistro, beignets are served atop orange marmalade with a side of chocolate pots de crème.



Crab cake topped with coleslaw

PHOTOS BY SPARK ST. JUDE



VG Bistro dining room

BY HOPE S. PHILBRICK

# EVERYDAY CELEBRATION

## Bistro VG aims to please on all occasions

warmth and create a contemporary Mediterranean look. The menu has been revamped—with Chef Eddie Garcia-Guzman

still in charge of the kitchen—to include several new options, including small plates and woodfire-grilled pizzas. The rebranding appears to be working: According to Stephen, Bistro VG is attracting a new crowd without losing longtime Van Gogh’s customers. Count me among the newbies.

Securing a 6:30 p.m. reservation was a snap, so I was surprised to discover the dining room was filled to near capacity when we arrived. We were seated at a table for two that was snug up against a brick wall; it sounds cramped but felt surprisingly spacious. Stephen was waiting on several tables, yet remained attentive throughout our meal. The hostess, a water server, a food runner and someone else (perhaps the manager on duty) also stopped by to check on us over the course of the evening. I’m not a fan of interruptions, but all these tableside visitors seemed genuinely interested in our satisfaction and were skilled at checking in without launching into frivolous conversation.

We started the meal with two complimentary flutes of champagne. The wine was tasty and not cloyingly sweet, the way some inexpensive sparklers can be.

Among the daily specials was an heirloom tomato and buffalo mozzarella salad. The classic dish is one of my favorites, and this preparation was well executed. Pale yellow and bright red tomato wedges were nestled against slices of white cheese that peeked out from underneath arugula leaves drizzled with a balsamic dressing.

Kobe beef tortoloni was another small plate special that sounded too good to pass up and lived up to expectations. The meat was fork-tender and the pasta al dente, all served with delicate sauce and shaved cheese.

Stephen recommended Van Gogh’s crab cake with vanilla-citrus vinaigrette as a starter. Thick with mayonnaise and topped with an unexpected coleslaw, it stood out as the meal’s sole disappointment. To be fair, my husband thought it was tasty and didn’t hide his glee when I pushed the plate away.

Three large grilled diver scallops were served with a delicious combination of sweet corn and potato tortoloni, caramelized shallot and brown butter sauce.

### DINING ESSENTIALS

**BISTRO VG**

70 W. Crossville Road  
Roswell  
770-993-1156

www.knowwheretogogh.com

**Hours:** Lunch: Mon.–Fri. 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Bar service and small plates:

Mon.–Fri. 2:30–5 p.m.

Dinner: Mon.–Thur. 5–10 p.m. and

Fri.–Sat. 5–11 p.m. Closed Sundays

**Reservations:** Yes

**Dress Code:** Smart casual

**Cuisine:** Contemporary French

**Alcohol:** Full bar

**Smoking:** Outdoors

**Cost:** Entrées \$30 and less

**Credit Cards:** American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa

**Outdoor Seating:** Patio, weather permitting

**Parking:** Valet

Salt-crusted bone-in rib eye was flavorful and tender, served with comforting whipped potatoes. Béarnaise sauce came in a small cup alongside, a thoughtful presentation that lets the diner control the amount of sauce used.

Three warm, square beignets arrived served atop orange marmalade with a side of chocolate pots de crème (a French pudding-like custard). The beignets were light, fluffy and coated with a cinnamon sugar. The flavor combination was fabulous.

Told that the caramelized peach tarte tatin was served with clementine ice cream, we opted to try that as well. Though I couldn’t detect any clementine flavor in the ice cream, the texture was perfect. The tarte tatin was fresh-from-the-oven warm, yet the peaches maintained a soft bite.

While we sat sipping cappuccinos, a group of women was escorted past our table to a large, private booth. I wondered if perhaps they were having a baby shower or a bachelorette party. I never found out, but I can say this: Bistro VG is a place to consider for special events, as well as just a nice dinner out. **SP**

MAIN COURSE

The special occasion restaurant fills a necessary niche. Whether planning an event for celebration or mourning—or something in between—the dining destination is chosen to host a gathering that’s anticipated to linger in memory. But from the restaurateur’s perspective, being the go-to destination for infrequent events isn’t necessarily the best scenario. An owner wants to see the place filled every night it’s open.

Such was the motive behind revamping Van Gogh’s into Bistro VG. “We had a lot of regular customers who came in only once a year,” explained our server Stephen on a recent Saturday evening. “So the owners decided to make some changes.”

What’s new? The once dark space is now bright and white; touches like bold artwork, blue glass and soft golden-hued upholstery add