



ENTERTAINMENT

DINING & DRINKING

DINING REVIEWS

First Bite: Tidal

New Mission Bay restaurant is run by much-respected local chef Amy DiBiase

By **Pam Kragen** 4:56 P.M. MAY 2, 2014

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COMMENTS

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Bite-size portions of three entrees at newly opened Tidal restaurant at the Paradise Point resort in Mission Bay, from left: olive-oil poached halibut, salmon Wellington and diver scallops with Parmesan foam. — Pam Kragen

MISSION BAY — Chef Amy DiBiase has moved around San Diego kitchens a lot since arriving from Maine in 2001, but judging by the sophisticated but reasonably priced food she's turning out at newly opened **Tidal** on Mission Bay, the well-regarded chef may have finally found her culinary home.

Tidal is the newly refurbished bayfront restaurant at the Paradise Point Resort & Spa. Formerly the overly expensive and unappetizingly named Baleen, the onetime beach hut has been revamped into an invitingly sunny oasis with oversize ball lamps, vibrant blue and orange accents, a central quartet of metal-plated chairs and one of the best waterside views in the area.



The interior of newly remodeled Tidal restaurant at the Paradise Point Resort & Spa on Mission Bay. — *Paradise Point*

DiBiase's eclectic menu is a reflection of everything she's learned along the way at local restaurants including Laurel, Roseville, The Shores and, yes, Baleen, where she worked from 2006-2008. Given the opportunity to create her own menu and manage the new restaurant concept, she came back a year ago and has slowly developed the menu that she unveiled with the name and remodeling last month.

So what is DiBiase's concept? It's a menu that's favors well-prepared and perfectly seasoned seafood, meats and locally sourced vegetables over carbs like pasta, breads and starches. The sauces and starters are French-inspired but easier on the waistline.



The diver scallop at Tidal restaurant is served with a crispy slice of prosciutto and a Parmesan froth. — Pam Krage

And she has taken traditional fine-dining dishes and given them a surprise twist.

Her Wellington starts with roasted salmon, not beef, topped with a heavenly layer of morel mushrooms then baked in a buttery puff pastry.

She has also combined two of her native New England classics -- clam chowder and steamed mussels -- in the Venus Clams dish, served in a delicious broth (bacon, cream, pureed salsify, capers, lemon zest and a dash of green chile oil) that's so good you'll want to drink it.

And for dessert (DiBiase's an ace pastry chef, too) there's an upside-down cake with spiced pears, rather than pineapple. The dish has a surprising kick and a rich pistachio brown butter glaze.

During a menu tasting this week, I sampled bites of 15 dishes, and found them all worth ordering again (and again, in the case of the clams). The menu is divided into five sections, plus a large selection of American cheeses as well as house-made desserts.

As fitting its name, Tidal's menu is seafood focused, but carnivores will find several of DiBiase's famously roasted and braised meats as well.

Shared plates and mostly finger food, like a chicken liver mousse that pops with flavor thanks to a dash of house-made strawberry-black pepper jam. Also terrific is the suckling pig pate with mission fig mostarda on a crisp polenta cake.



Samples of shared plate items at Tidal, from left: suckling pig "pate" with mission fig mostarda, chicken liver mousse with strawberry-black pepper jam, and con pane with blood orange-fennel butter and forno beet hummus. — Pam Kragen

Besides the clams, the appetizers menu includes a swoon-worthy ricotta gnudi topped with a dollop of seven-hour braised lamb that will melt in your mouth.

The diver scallops, served with a potato chip-like crisp of prosciutto and a Parmesan foam is decadent.

The chicken confit, thanks to its slow roast in liquid, is ultra-juicy, and served with a madeira reduction and crispy chicken skin. Also a big mouth-pleaser is the olive oil-poached halibut, topped with the surprise bite of pommery mustard. And the sliver of rib-eye I tasted -- with a nice char, pink center and a satisfying crunch of salt crystals on top --- made me want more.



Entree samples, from left, chicken confit with madeira reduction and crispy skin, certified Angus rib eye with charred leek and smoked pork cheek with dandelion greens and apricot lavender glaze. — Pam Kragen

Menu prices are lower than Baleen, with shared plates and appetizers from \$5-\$15, entrees from \$21 to \$39 and \$5 sides. Cocktails, created by Snake Oil, are \$11 (try the Tokyo 75, a refreshing eye-opener with the zing of ginger reduction, yuzu and sparkling Riesling).

Finding Tidal takes work. It's at the very back of the tropically landscaped Paradise Point resort and signage to get there (at least for the moment) is limited. Hotel guests make up a big share of customers but resort owners are hoping DiBiase's well-earned reputation will put local diners on its trail quickly.

With Tidal's menu this solid from day one, it looks DiBiase has finally found a restaurant that can showcase the skills that have made her a favorite among other local chefs.

Paradise Point Resort & Spa, 1404 Vacation Road, San Diego; (858) 274-4630