

SPECIALTY RESTAURANT REVIEW:

LAWN CLUB GRILL

on Celebrity Cruises'
Celebrity Silhouette

by

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The Lawn Club Grill is the latest creation by Celebrity Cruises Vice President of Culinary Operations Jacques Van Staten. As with his earlier creations - - *e.g.* Qsine - - this venue is not only a very good dining experience but one that is different than other cruise ship specialty restaurants.

One of the unique features of Celebrity's Solstice-class ships is a half acre of real grass in the area surrounding the ship's funnels. This area is called "The Lawn Club" and is used for such things as bocce, croquet and outdoor concerts under the stars.

On the first three ships of the Solstice class, this area includes a small outdoor theater where glass blowers from the Corning Glass Museum give demonstrations of their craft. Reportedly, there were not enough glass blowers to staff another such venue and so Celebrity decided to put a new dining venue in that space on the fourth ship of the class, Celebrity

Silhouette.

The Lawn Club Grill was the result. It is an informal venue with glass walls that enable the restaurant to be part of the lawn area outside. On a warm Caribbean night, this is idyllic.

Where others might have been content to put a typical al fresco dining venue in this location, Chef Van Staten's creativity would not allow him to stop there. Instead, his concept gives the guests the opportunity to interact with the chefs by participating in cooking the meal.

The starter course at the Lawn Club Grill is flat breads - - essentially personal pizza. After washing up, the guest can go to a table in the center of the restaurant and prepare the dough for the flat bread including tossing it into the air. When the dough is ready, the guest goes to a counter where an array of toppings is waiting. In addition to tomato sauce and cheese, there is fresh



garlic, chicken, pepperoni, vegetables, sausage, peppers and other similar items. When the guest is finished creating the pizza, it is handed off to one of the chefs who places it in the pizza oven that is in the open kitchen area along the forward wall of the restaurant.

Overseeing this process and advising the guest along the way is one of the restaurant's chefs. This advice combined with the freshness of the resulting pizza ensures against disaster. Moreover, the fact that the guest selects the items to be included in the pizza results in a pizza that is truly made to order.

In addition, or as an alternative, to the flat bread, the Lawn Club Grill offers a make-your-own salad bar.

For the main course, guests can select from a number of cuts of steak, veal and lamb as well as salmon, red snapper and various kabobs. Not only can the guest read about these items on the menu but there is a glass-door refrigerator where the guest can examine the various offerings in their raw form.

Having made his or her selection, the guest can grill each item on the restaurant's self-ventilated grills in the open kitchen. Once again, one of the ship's chefs is there to guide the guest and offer advice on the cooking.

Of course, many people when they go on a cruise do not want to cook. They are there to relax and let someone else do the work. Not even the prospect of obtaining expert advice from a professional is a sufficient lure to make them don a chef's hat and apron.

For those of us who are in that camp, the chefs at the Lawn Club Grill will happily prepare the entire

meal and serve it to you. No guest participation is required. I am told that about half the guests elect this option.

I chose to allow the experts to prepare my steaks and was very glad that I did. My selections were a filet mignon and a rib eye steak. Both were prepared exactly as I specified. The filet was beautifully tender and the rib eye exploded with flavor. Side dishes of lobster macaroni and cheese (with real chunks of lobster) and gourmet baked beans made it an excellent bar-beque experience.

For dessert, I had the warm chocolate chip cookie. This was no ordinary cookie but rather one so large that it occupied an entire pan. The dough is cooked ala minute and the guest can specify how much cooking it will receive. Topped with vanilla ice cream, it is a tasty finale to a meal tailored to ones desires.