



Blogs

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## \$13 at ... Players on Madison

Wed Apr 16, 2008 at 06:02:49 AM

*In this weekly feature, C-Notes stretches your dollar at restaurants around the region, because no matter who many times it happens, that damn tax bill always surprises us. This week ...*

### Players on Madison

14523 Madison Avenue, Lakewood, (216) 226-5200,

[www.playersonmadison.com](http://www.playersonmadison.com)

For Scene's full review, [click here](#).

**What \$13 got us:** A glass of Cab (\$5), an order of lobster and scallop potstickers (\$6), and a split-order of potato, blue cheese and truffle fritters (\$4.50)

**What else \$13 can get you:** \$5 drinks include white and red wine specials, and specialty martinis. The appetizer menu is half-off, and offers quite a nice selection: sea bass tempura lollipops (\$6), Caribbean tuna tartar (\$6), coriander and cumin crusted calamari (\$4.50), chorizo and manchego stuffed banana peppers (\$4.50), artisan cheeses by The Cheese Shop (\$6.50), phyllo and almond encrusted brie (\$4.50) and roasted chicken and coconut spring rolls (\$5). (The Spring menu is due to be rolled out soon, so some items will change.)

**The Verdict:** Go all in. ...

Players on Madison is one of those sexy places -- the type of restaurant that is sure to impress a first date and certain to please your lady for an anniversary. With an inventive menu of Italian and Mediterranean eats, heavy on the fresh sea food and custom gourmet pizzas, the Lakewood spot is a consistent winner, an ace in the hole for amorous endeavors.

But it ain't cheap. So when I discovered a happy-hour special, I

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Do you  
 drink coffee  
 or know  
 someone  
 who does?

## Categories

went straight away.

From 5 till 7 Monday through Friday, selected wines and specialty martinis are \$5, and all appetizers are half-off. I went for a generous pouring of the red, a mellow Cabernet whose curves matched the gentle arch of the bar. The crowd was a mix of after-work, still-in-slacks types and neighborhood folks who came in for a sip and a bite, and a chat with George the Barkeep. Although this is a snazzy place, it was comfortable and welcoming; in my jeans, I felt equally at home as my companion, whose job requires him to wear nice pants, which sucks for him.

We appreciated the tasty, warm bread that was served, complementarily, with a straightforward herbed butter. Then we dug into the apps — generous sized portions which left me full until my midnight snack. I went with the lobster and scallop potstickers, delicate triangles of flaky Philo surrounding luscious, perfectly cooked chunks of buttery lobster and fresh scallop. Flecks of red pepper provided a nice crunch, and the perfectly cooked pockets were served on a bed of sweet and tangy pineapple. Lemongrass and aji mirin, a sweet rice wine, rounded out the sweet, Asian-inspired sauce. The pairing of the saltiness in the seafood and the sweetness of the sauce was a winning combo.

My companion ordered the Prince Edward Island Mussels, which would have made Anne of Green Gables totally stoked. A whole mess of the critters were served in a tomato broth with fennel, Italian sausage, and oregano. My guest, an avid mussel consumer, described his dish as “good.” (You’ll have to excuse them. He’s a man of few words. This probably means they were delicious.)

We shared an order of potato, blue cheese and truffle fritters. The little tender orbs of deliciousness were light but hearty. With a texture and shape similar to beignets, they were comprised of smooth potato surrounding a gooey center of light, melty cheese. They were surprisingly airy in texture, given the utter decadence of the ingredients. The luxuriously earthy flavor of truffle peaked out from behind a peppered honey-balsamic gastrique, and crumbled bits of blue cheese completed the chaotic yet exciting arrangement of flavors. My companion also described them as “good.” We’re working on his verbalization skills. -- *Tori Woods*

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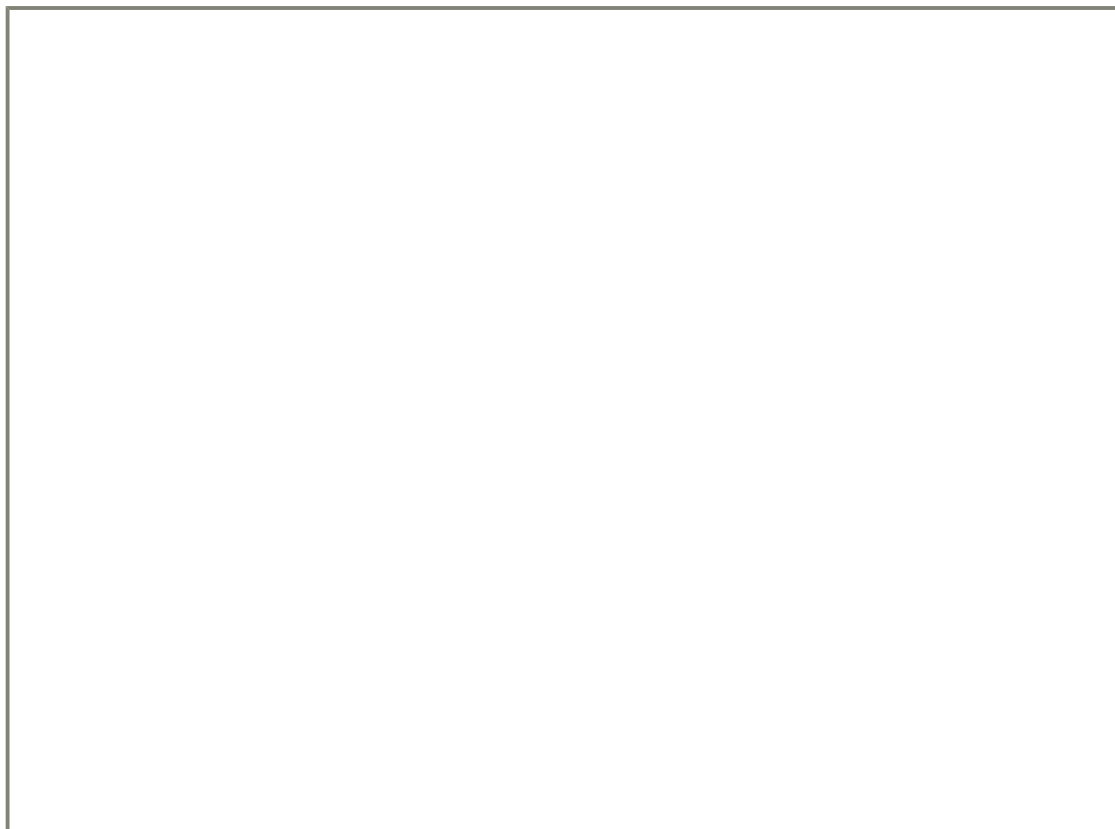
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**Amalia Alfie**  
Celebrity I resemble  
most: "A Botticelli  
heroine."

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