



Left: The outside dining area at Hunters' Tavern provides ample seating in the heart of downtown Easton.

Below: The seared rare Ahi Tuna, a favorite among locals.

Hunters' Tavern

(located in the Tidewater Inn)
101 East Dover St., Easton
410-820-1300
410-819-8088
Tidewaterinn.com

Review by Doug and Christine O'Connor
Photos by Tony Lewis, Jr.

It was an absolutely beautiful early July evening, and we seized it as a gift to dine in Easton. We were headed toward Hunters' Tavern located in the Tidewater Inn. Many of you may remember this space as Restaurant Local. Upon arrival we were delighted to find there was outdoor dining available. There was a gentle breeze and low humidity so naturally we opted to go alfresco. Sitting outdoors instilled a comfortable, laidback ambiance for the evening. We could see it was a place for friends to gather as we observed other diners.

The outdoor dining area is set on a covered brick patio. Set in the ceiling are large

When to Enjoy: Breakfast 7 am - 10 am
Lunch served 11:30 am - 2:30 pm
Dinner served 5 pm - 9 pm

Expect to Pay: Appetizers \$5-\$15
Light fare/Sandwiches \$10-\$18
Dinner entrees \$28 average

Owner: John Wilson

Chef: Paul Shiley



platter with fresh bread. The bread had a terrific yeast aroma and kosher salt baked on top. It was served with whipped herb butter and basil garlic spread.

Peggy informed us of the specials that evening and made a recommendation letting us know how many people savor the Seared Rare Ahi Tuna. She knows the Easton Shore culture very well and what the patrons appreciate. As much as we love Ahi Tuna, we opted for several other choices. The Tavern Mussels are prepared in three different ways, and Christine chose the mussels with Saffron and Cream (\$10). Doug was compelled to order the Lobster Tempura (\$15) a dish one does not see on every menu.

When our appetizers arrived in a very timely fashion we were not disappointed. Doug's Lobster Tempura was delicious. As he bit into the light, crunchy tempura, the tender, flavorful lobster exploded in his mouth. The tempura was lightly drizzled with a sweet 'n' sour glaze and wasabi sauce and paired with a seaweed salad. The large bowl of mussels arrived, and Christine knew that she had ordered a fine choice. She enjoyed the fragrance for a few moments before eating. The blend of savory saffron, tomato, wine

and butter will titillate the senses. They were seasoned with scallions and cracked black pepper. She lingered and enjoyed the mussels, short of those she shared with Doug. Once the mussels were finished, she enjoyed some of the cream sauce with grilled ciabatta bread.

Doug was more than happy to order one of the evening's specials, Rockfish with crab (\$24). Peggy informed us how the rockfish was prepared and served; oven baked, topped with Jumbo Lump Crab, lightly sauced with Beurre Blanc with Toasted almonds sprinkled on top. Christine ordered the Crab Cake and Fried Oysters (\$30) which is always in good style on



Smith Island Lemon Cake is created with ten thin layers of cake with lemon glaze in between each layer.



Jumbo lump crab cake and fried oysters.

the Eastern Shore. We each had a glass of wine to accompany our meal. The wine list offers a nice variety of wines, but is not overwhelming to a novice wine drinker. Most of the wines at Hunters' Tavern are sold by the bottle or glass. Doug had the Fat Bastard Sauvignon Blanc (\$9) and Christine had the Estancia Pinot Grigio (\$8).

Dinners come with a house salad or a Caesar salad. We had one of each, the Caesar with crisp Romaine, fresh parmesan and crunchy croutons and the house with Romaine and field greens, and an assortment of fresh vegetables served with a vinaigrette dressing. Doug's mouth watering Rockfish and Crab arrived piping hot. The combination of crab and rockfish was a true taste of the Chesapeake Bay. This plate was served with garlic mashed potatoes. Under the rockfish lay a surprise of fresh sautéed spinach seasoned with minced garlic. Christine's Crab Cake and Fried Oysters were absolutely to die for. The crab cake was huge and filled with Jumbo lump crab meat and seasoned nicely. The fried oysters were wonderful, pleasantly crunchy while remaining tender. The evening had been perfect and we were not finished.

After dinner we had the opportunity to talk with the restaurant manager, Eric Radford. He enthusiastically talked about the Tidewater Inn and Hunters' Tavern and all of the renovations which have taken place. Not only has the restaurant

seen renovations, but the banquet rooms, including the famed Gold Room, have been restored to original grandeur, the meeting rooms have been updated with technology, and the guest rooms have seen changes. John Wilson, the owner, continues to make changes and improvements. At the same time he continues to build and take on new endeavors. At this time Wilson has plans to build a hotel, with banquet and meeting space, on Kent Island.

We could not pass on a dessert to share. On the menu that evening a decadent Smith Island Lemon Cake beckoned us to taste. It melted in our mouth and danced on our taste buds. The Smith Island cake is created with ten thin layers of cake with lemon glaze in between each layer. The cake is topped with a fluffy butter cream frosting. It was a perfect ending to our perfect visit to the Hunters' Tavern. ■

Doug O'Connor has 20+ years of experience as an executive chef and a food and beverage director and is involved with the Chesapeake Chef's Association. He graduated from Johnson and Wales University with degrees in Culinary Arts and Food Service management. Christine graduated from Johnson and Wales with a degree in Hospitality Management. They currently reside in Cape St. Clare with their two children.



Readers' Restaurant Guide!

Welcome back to our monthly Readers' Restaurant Guide! Comments quoted are representative of all those we've received. Send us a review of a restaurant you've recently visited by sending in the form on page 57 and you could win our monthly drawing for a \$50 gift card to a local restaurant. Restaurants listed are full service and locally owned.

Advertisers are listed in red.

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Accepted Music Menu Bar Winner
\$- Average price of entrees are under \$15
\$\$- Average price of entrees are between \$15 and \$25
\$\$\$- Average price of entrée is over \$25

Talbot County

208 Talbot Restaurant
208 Talbot St., St. Michaels
410-745-3838 \$\$\$

☎ Y 🏆

Chef uses local and seasonal products to create exquisite dishes.

Acapulco

201 Marlboro Ave., Easton
410-763-9060 \$

Y 🏆

Authentic Mexican fare.

Ava's Pizzeria & Wine Bar
409 S. Talbot St., St. Michaels
410-745-3081 \$\$\$

☎ Y 🏆

Savory gourmet pizzas, pastas, salads, & extensive wine list.

Bartlett Pear Inn

28 S. Harrison St., Easton
410-770-3300 \$\$\$

☎ Y 🏆

Upscale American Bistro with French technique utilizing local products, Bar/Lounge, light fare cocktail menu.

Bay Hundred Restaurant & Tiki Bar

6178 Tighman Island Rd., Tighman
410-886-2126

☎ Y 🏆

Fresh local seafood & hand cut beef.

Eastern Shore
EASTERN SHORE
find your happy place
Town & Country
wine, liquor, etc.
28248 St. Michaels Road, Easton
410-822-1433 Open 7 days
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