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food +

CITY BITES

An Astoria steakhouse of style and substance

CHRISTOS STEAK HOUSE

41-08 23rd Ave.

Astoria
718-777-8400

HOURS: Every day, 4 p.m. to midnight.

PRICE RANGE: Main courses, \$18 to \$35; porterhouse steak for two, \$67 and three, \$88; lobster, \$18 a pound; appetizers, \$10 to \$16.

CREDIT CARDS: All major cards.

NOTABLE DISHES: Shrimp dolmades, grilled scampi, grilled octopus, Greek spread, porterhouse steak, strip steak, steamed lobster, Greek cheesecake with honey, poached pears, banana creme, lemon cake.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: Steps at entrance.

DIRECTIONS: Corner of 23rd Avenue and 41st Street.



NEWDAY PHOTOS / BRUCE GIBERT

Reopened and renamed after a six-month renovation, Christos offers specialties including Porterhouse steak and grilled octopus in a clubby atmosphere.

was consistent. Very good, very quiet.

Last year, the establishment closed for six months. It has been renovated, refurbished and renamed Christos. And it won't stay under the radar for long. Christos is terrific.

Come here for first-class steaks, well-prepared seafood,

savory Greek dishes, and excellent service. Owner George Stergiopoulos and consulting chef Mina Newman have turned this once-fine spot into a prime destination.

The look is warm and clubby without overdoing the style.

You still pass a window full of well-marbled meat en route to the softly lit dining room, which includes a crowded lobster tank among the furnishings.

You should immediately nibble on a platter of tangy taramosalata, roasted eggplant and tzatziki with grilled pita bread while considering the menu.

Then, move on to expertly grilled octopus atop greens in a red wine vinaigrette; or enjoy the smoky shrimp dolmades, grilled head-on giants wrapped in grape leaves.

Meaty little crab-cakes arrive with cucumber salad and roasted pepper sauce. The house's saganaki, made with ripe vlahotyri cheese, is a trio of deftly fried logs.

The congenitally carnivorous can begin with thick-cut pork belly on spinach and mushrooms; sauteed sweetbreads; sausages with beans; or a Kobe-style steak tartare.

Christos' porterhouse deserves all the adjectives. Crusty and juicy, tender and full fla-

vored, it's a grand steak. The New York strip is its closest rival, but you can have a very satisfying meal debating the merits of the T-bone, the rib-eye and the filet mignon, too.

Lobsters, expertly steamed or broiled, might make decisions harder.

But Christos does offer a surf-and-turf for two, combining lobster, filet mignon, loin of pork and grilled shrimp. Grilled wild salmon, with chervil-white wine sauce, is respectable but trails in this company.

The major side dishes include the obligatory creamed spinach but also sauteed spinach with feta; steak fries but also braised lemon spuds and salt-baked beans.

And desserts delight, from pears poached in Mavrodaphne wine to a luscious Greek cheesecake drizzled with warm honey; a six-layer lemon cake to sheep's milk yogurt with quince and banana cream "pudding" with vanilla biscotti.

Don't worry. You'll be back. In 2006, Christos really makes some noise.



BY PETER M. GIANOTTI
STAFF WRITER

In the highly publicized world of New York steak houses, the former Christos Hasapota Taverna, meat market and restaurant, was as modest as it