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Review: Mat and Naddie's

EATS



## DINING OUT

### Mat and Naddie's

Mat and Naddie's nestles along the levee, just below the waters of the Mississippi. Only blocks from the bustle of Carrollton Avenue, it feels remote, like a roadhouse along a country highway.

The weekday lunch, a post-Katrina addition and the only meal Mat and Naddie's served for months after reopening, attracts professionals from area offices and universities. The buffet lunch is strictly catering fare, but catering fare done well. The offerings might include salad, sliced ham, a good wild mushroom pâté or an even better creamy Creole shrimp salad. It's a quick, sunny spot for a pleasant lunch.

In the evening, though, Mat and Naddie's is a funky party. Dinner is served only three days a week, and the friendly staff works the room like the night is a special event. The building, filled with art and hand painted signs, is laidback enough for a night out with friends and just elegant enough for a date.

The menu reads like the work of a local with wanderlust. Fried oysters and plenty of Gulf shrimp appear, but so do couscous and jasmine sticky rice. Some ingredients may be exotic, but everything I tasted there satisfied like the most familiar comfort food. A recent dinner at Mat and Naddie's was the best meal I've had in months.

A nice filet mignon, served with pebbles of Maytag blue cheese and bacon beurre rouge, was cooked exactly to medium rare and served with a vinergary heap of wilted greens. A massive braised lamb shank came with a tasty side of couscous studded with currants. The plump scallops stuffed with slivers of delicate truffles, however, was the standout entrée. Desserts, like the dense sweet potato and pecan pie, measure up to the rest of the food.

The service is polished and friendly. The wine list interesting and well priced. The food creative and satisfying. Mat and Naddie's is worth the short trip to the edge of town. 937 Leonidas St., 861-9600, Mon-Fri 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Fri-Sat and Mon 5:30-9:30 p.m. Also, Thr 5:30-9:30 p.m. during Jazz Fest.

—Todd A. Price