

Dining with style (and money) at the new Portland City Grill

FRANK JORDAN
News editor

A lot of restaurants in the Portland metro area offer the same great menu that the Portland City Grill does, but no restaurant in Portland can offer the same great views that it does from the 30th floor of the U.S. Bancorp Tower in downtown Portland.

The Portland City Grill has been open since March 19. This restaurant took the place of Atwater's, which was a fixture on the Portland dining scene for over 20 years. When the owners of the tower decided that a change was needed, Atwater's was closed and Pacific Coast Restaurants was brought into the fold to create a unique dining experience in the space.

When my family and I arrived for our 6:15 reservation, the bar was packed and the restaurant was in full swing. A Blazer game was on the T.V. and it was standing-room-only at the bar. Many of Portland's movers and shakers were milling about, drinks in hand, surveying the grand scene around them. A cloudy evening greeted onlookers grasping for a look at what view this Portland skyscraper could offer.

My mother, brother, sister and I were taken to a table next to a window on the northeast corner of the building. The close-in view was indeed awesome. I was hoping for a break in the overcast to see features in the distance, but the gray skies were unforgiving.

The Portland City Grill has a very impressive wine list, complete with the finest of what this country and others around the world have to offer in partaking

of the grape.

I, however, chose a imported German beer, one that I had not had since being in Germany 15 years ago. The drinks, to my surprise, were not as expensive as I thought they would be, considering the surroundings.

The four of us shared a sushi appetizer and some chicken spring rolls, which were very good. The Portland City Grill has a menu featuring USDA prime steaks and fresh Hawaiian, Pacific Coast and Alaskan seafood prepared with classic, Northwest, island and Asian influences. I chose a New York steak that was very good, complete with baked potato that was sprinkled with garlic and roasted asparagus. My brother had the swordfish over rice and a Caesar salad; my sister had a lamb chop sprinkled liberally with paprika and my mother had a halibut steak, which, upon sampling, was very good.

We topped off our meal with New York-style cheesecake topped with strawberries, which capped off a great evening.

The Portland City Grill is very scenic and also very expensive. The entire meal for the four of us was a shade under \$200. I would recommend this place for anyone who is really trying to impress someone. But personally, I would probably want to take someone there for a second or third date, because if you take someone there for a first date and the other person does not like you, you just spent a paycheck for nothing. Except maybe a great meal and, of course, the view.

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Portland City Grill is located in the US Bank tower, the home of the old Atwaters on SW fifth Avenue. parking is complimentary for two and a half hours on the corner of SW Pine & fourth avenue.

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INTERNET PHOTO

Sandra Bullock keeps men and criminals at bay in "Murder by Numbers." Ryan Gosling, Michael Pitt and Ben Chaplin also star in this crime thriller that was released April 19. It's rated R for violence, language, one sex scene and brief drug use.

Don't count on 'Murder By Numbers' to add up

JENNIFER KANE
Staff Writer

Most murder mystery movies are meant to keep us at the edge of our seats wondering who killed whom, and when they're going to get caught. "Murder By Numbers" doesn't quite fit this profile. Instead, there are a few different scenarios meshing together to make one unclassifiable film.

The movie stars Sandra Bullock as Cassie, a tough detective who knows her stuff. She's good, and she's aware of this. Soon into the movie, it becomes apparent that she has more issues than just her casework. Many scenes involve her drinking and getting depressed to Sheryl Crow's music playing in the background. These problems surface when she gets paired with a handsome rookie partner, Sam (Ben Chaplin). She is able to be intimate with men, but then pushes them away if it comes even close to serious.

The murder element of the

movie comes from high school seniors (Ryan Gosling and Michael Pitt) who join forces and kill a young girl. While Justin (Pitt) is a genius outcast, Richard (Gosling) is the typical witty, rich kid who everybody likes. The part that bothered me about these two is not that in real high school they would never even allow themselves to cross paths, but that throughout the entire movie I was trying to figure out if they were, in fact, homosexual or not. There are no scenes in which the two are intimate, but a sensual feeling is in the air. I realize it's a miniscule thing to be bothered by, but it became an itch I couldn't scratch.

It is not the actual killing, but the relationship between the boys that was the creepiest component of the film. The two come together simply out of boredom and plan an ingenious, almost perfect murder. They plant numerous clues to lead Cassie and Sam in the very wrong direction. And of course just when you think they're going to get away with it, some little piece of evi-

dence comes about that places them in question.

The entire soap-opera plot comes together quite nicely with a bit of a twist at the end. I refuse to disclose any information about what happens to the two boys. But as for Cassie and her fear of men, well, her issues are resolved by the end of the movie. Did you really think they'd put two good-looking actors together and not have them end up happily ever after?

So what is my actual opinion of this movie? Well, I'd say it's worth watching. Don't break your back running to the theaters to see it on the big screen though. I think this one might be better to simply keep in the "rent it later" file.

"Murder By Numbers" was directed by Barbet Schroeder, who is known for her work on "Single White Female." It is rated R due to language and some pretty gruesome scenes, and opened in theaters Friday, April 19.

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