

eat

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Devan and Kate Dunn took over the resort in 2015 as they were looking to leave the Willamette Valley and start a business in Bend. With over a dozen cabins, 20-plus RV sites and nearby camping at South Twin Lake and other campgrounds, you can make it a weekend getaway. It's one of the first lakes you encounter driving from the south on South Century Drive, and one of the first to open at the start of the fishing season in April. The two small lakes are perfect for fishing, kayaking and paddleboarding.

Seasonal Chef David Anderson has continued with offerings popular with locals, including prime rib dinner on Saturday nights. The food is focused on basic homemade meals — from spaghetti and meatballs to barbecue ribs or fish and chips. Diners can enjoy eating outside on the paver patio or under the trees accompanied by opportunistic barn swallows and chipmunks. While the lovely view of the lake through the trees is best outdoors, the wood-paneled simple restaurant has large windows for those who prefer to sit indoors. This year, a bar has been added indoors and will have seating as soon as restaurants are fully open.

A friend and I drove down late one afternoon. We arrived at 3:45 and were informed by our friendly server that we could look at the menu but couldn't order food until after 4 p.m. We chose a few lunch items and a dinner entree.

Since it was Thursday and I couldn't order the prime rib, the shaved prime rib sandwich seemed like the next best thing. This is one of those sandwiches that I wanted to savor each bite. Each was filled with a generous portion of thinly shaved, impossibly tender meat covered in melted cheese. The flavor was heightened by creamy horseradish that was spread thick enough to taste, but not overwhelm, on a soft hoagie bun. It was all balanced by a pile of sweet caramelized onions. If the sandwich is this good, I'm going to have to go back and try the prime rib dinner.

We shared a half house salad. It was very fresh, with a base of cut dark green leafy lettuce and romaine. Thinly sliced radishes yellow and red grape tomatoes sat atop the greens mixed with raw white onions, julienned carrot strips, and large croutons. It was complete and satisfying.

The fish and chips basket was a bit of a disappointment. Instead of chips, we opted for onion rings. The tempura-type breading on the onion rings was a good fit, as the sweet onion flavor balanced the fried coating. The same breading on the halibut fish didn't work as well. The fish had been



Outdoor dining is offered at Twin Lakes Resort.

frozen as I would expect. When cooked, it lost most of its moisture, and the breading added to its dryness. It was served with a choice of tartar or cocktail sauce (we opted for both). Perhaps some vinegar might have created an illusion of juiciness. As it was, we didn't finish the fish.

Although I grabbed the spaghetti and meatballs dinner entree to go, I made sure to taste it as soon as it was served. It comes with two thick pieces of garlic bread. While there wasn't anything extraordinary about the pasta or marinara sauce, it was nonetheless very satisfying. It tasted homemade, like something my mother might have cooked for me. The meatballs were light and loaded with flavor from Italian spices and had a good amount of pepper to add punch. This would be the perfect meal after a long hike or hours of paddling on the lake. It was good on its own, but I bet if I were hungry after a lot of activity, it would boost the satisfaction level tenfold.

I returned on the weekend to try breakfast that turned out to be one of the better breakfasts I've had in quite a while. The restaurant serves breakfast from 8 to 10:30 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Owner Devan Dunn told me that they might open during the week if there is a demand. I arrived before 9 a.m., with the added benefit of finding a good parking spot that would make it easy to launch my paddleboard after I ate. The

Twin Lakes Resort Restaurant

The restaurant hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Twin Lakes Resort is about 45 minutes southwest of Bend, and 25 minutes west of La Pine. The main resort is located on the shores of South Twin Lake. The physical address is 11200 S. Century Drive in La Pine, but don't trust Google Maps.

For more information: 541-382-6432 or twinlakesresort.net

menu runs the gambit from a classic breakfast and chicken fried steak and eggs to creative recipes that include a veggie scramble, avocado toast, a breakfast croissant and a breakfast burrito.

Because I wasn't able to decide between the Eggs Benedict and the Marionberry Griddlecakes, I tried both, and was impressed. The Signature Eggs Benedict starts with two eggs perfectly poached (their shape suggested that they were cooked in a poaching pan). A generous serving of thick-sliced ham sat on a large Big Ed's sourdough English muffin. It was all smothered in chipotle hollandaise. The hollandaise was smooth and an expert balance of butter and lemon. The chipotle added some zest without being

too spicy. I chose the country potatoes with grilled onions but asked to hold the green pepper. Small squares of red-skinned potatoes were crunchy on the edges and perfectly cooked and creamy inside.

The menu describes the Marionberry Griddlecakes as three "fluffy buttermilk pancakes served with our house-made marionberry syrup." This is the perfect description, as the buttermilk griddlecakes were very light, fluffy and lightly sweet. I was disappointed that there were no Marionberries cooked into the pancakes, nor bites of the fruit in the syrup. Still, the light striping of syrup added the fruit flavor. They were delightful, and perfect fuel for my after breakfast paddle.

Any breakfast menu item would likely live up to its description. Even the fresh brewed decaf coffee was excellent with no hint of bitterness. A tourist at a neighboring table had the prime rib hash and was raving about how good it was.

If you are thinking of a beautiful spot to enjoy a prime rib dinner, Twin Lakes resort would be a great way to spend a warm Summer Saturday night with a lovely view. I've found my place and expect to be a regular this summer for an early morning Saturday breakfast and a paddle with my pup before the crowds arrive.

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