

Branmor's American Grill

Casually elegant dining with a broad appeal

A restaurant with a sophisticated décor and a phenomenal menu is often anything but casual and inviting. Branmor's American Grill in Bolingbrook, open since 1996, is all of the above.

"If you want to come in and have pasta and a beer, you can do that," explains Marshall Calpino, general manager. "If you want to have a lobster tail and a fine bottle of wine, you can do that, too."

Upon entering the 200-seat restaurant, fans of Frank Lloyd Wright will note the stained glass lampshades in each cozy booth and the simple yet elegant chairs at every table that emulate the architect's distinctive style, as does the design of the building itself.

In the warmer months, outdoor seating is available on two patios, one covered, one not.

The restaurant's laid-back ambiance - set to the tune of jazz that plays softly in the background - is the perfect complement to its amazingly flavorful food. It's an absolute must to begin the meal with the hefty jumbo lump crab cake (\$12), a sinfully delicious starter that's served with a decadent lobster cream sauce. The coconut shrimp (\$10) - another tempting selection - features three jumbo butterfly shrimp dipped in Tempura batter and coconut served with chipotle pepper cream sauce.

During the short wait for the entrees to arrive, diners can munch on warm, freshly baked bread delivered by attentive servers. This is also a great time to enjoy the house salad (\$4), which is topped with French fried onions instead of croutons, or the homemade soup du jour (\$4 cup, \$5 bowl).

Entrees are consistently stellar at Branmor's. A dining companion fell in love with one of the restaurant's specialties, Walt's Barbecued Ribs (\$14 half slab, \$22 full slab), which are slathered with Executive Chef Walter Dobrovlny's signature barbeque sauce. The Grid Iron Steak (\$20), which is char-grilled and served with a wild mushroom bordelaise sauce and crumbled bleu cheese, is also an excellent choice. The fresh and flavorful Atlantic salmon (\$19) nearly melts in one's mouth, as does the chardonnay vinaigrette that accompanies it. A seasonal item, the pumpkin ravioli (\$19) - which arrives with pecans sprinkled atop the generous portion of pasta - is as tasty as it is artfully arranged on the plate.



Photos by Ed Ahern

fresh and flavorful entrée selections.

Diners can pair their entrees with wine by the glass (\$5.50 to \$11) or by the bottle (\$25 to \$50, though high-end selections run upwards of \$250) from Branmor's extensive wine list, which recently earned the restaurant two Awards of Excellence from *Wine Spectator* magazine.

Branmor's has plenty of delectable sandwiches, pasta dishes and salads that appeal to both the lunchtime and dinner crowds. The Black Angus Burger (\$8) boasts a half-pound, Black Angus-certified ground beef patty served on a soft pretzel roll and topped with cheese. The Santa Fe chicken (\$14) features Julienne chicken breast simmered in spicy Santa Fe butter sauce and combined with Roma tomatoes, spinach and ziti pasta. Those looking for lighter fare can opt for the roasted apple and spinach salad (\$7; with chicken, \$10), which gets much of its fabulous flavor from its candied walnuts, gorgonzola cheese, roasted apples and raspberry vinaigrette.

Branmor's signature dessert is the irresistible Flourless Chocolate Waffle (\$7), chocolate cake in the shape of a large waffle that's topped with French vanilla ice cream, caramel sauce, chocolate syrup, whipped cream and a heavenly raspberry coulis. Another delicious way to warm up on a cold winter night is with the exceptional Apple Upside Down Walnut Pie (\$6), a warm, heaping slice of apple pie topped with walnuts and buttery caramel that's served upside down with a scoop of cinnamon stick ice cream and a dollop of whipped cream.



QUICK FACTS

BRANMOR'S AMERICAN GRILL

300 Veterans Pkwy., Bolingbrook
630 226-9926

Recommended Dishes:
Jumbo lump crab cake,
Walt's Barbequed Ribs,
Atlantic salmon,
Flourless chocolate waffle

Cost: Appetizers: \$8 to \$13
Entrées: \$8 to \$35
Desserts: \$6 to \$8

Hours: Mon-Thur 11:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.,
Fri 11:30 a.m. - 10 p.m., Sat noon - 10 p.m.,
Sun noon - 8 p.m.

Extras: Extensive wine list, bar open
later M-Sun, reservations recommended,
outdoor dining (seasonal), catering