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### Louder phone would ease ordering at Sunset 44

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*SPECIAL TO THE POST-DISPATCH*

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I attended a wedding reception at Sunset 44 and was eager to return and sample from the regular menu. Once I got our takeout meal home we weren't disappointed, although the ordering process should have been quicker and easier.

I had gone to the restaurant's website, made our selections and tried three times to call in our order. No one picked up the phone, so I decided to drive to the restaurant.

As I waited for the bartender to give me a menu, I heard the phone ring behind the bar. The ringer must have been set on the lowest volume level. I could barely hear it, which must explain why my calls went unanswered.

We began our meal with a bowl of smoked tomato bisque soup (\$5; a cup of soup is \$3). The bisque came in a 4-ounce foam cup, and when I expressed dismay at the small size, the bartender was quick to bring another portion.

We both really liked the bisque. It was light yet rich, with smoky flavor shining through.

Next we shared a wonderful salad of stir-fried fresh spinach leaves (\$10). The spinach was still warm, although a thin layer of Brie cheese on top of the salad had firmed up. Pine nuts, Bermuda onion, garlic and tomato rounded out the salad, which was dressed with red chile oil. This salad could be a full meal, and a darn good one, at that.

Our entree selection was right on. We both prefer the dark meat of a chicken and the chicken confit (\$15) was quite tasty. Confit is a French cooking technique that means cooked in its own fat. In this dish, the cooks skim the fat from cooled chicken stock and use it to sauté leg/thigh sections (two per serving), then braise the chicken. The pieces of chicken were skinless; I'd have preferred mine cooked with the skin, because that would have added moisture to the somewhat dry meat.

The chicken came with vegetables and the most delightful mashed sweet potatoes we've ever enjoyed. We thought they contained marshmallow creme, but a call to the chef clarified that they had been made with a bit of cream and were infused with flavor from a vanilla bean.

One of the reasons we opted for this dish was the promise of braised red cabbage as an accompaniment. It was missing from the foam container, and we were disappointed.

For dessert we selected the bread pudding (\$5). It was delightful: a warm and heavy pudding laced with raisins and apples and crowned with a grand Kentucky bourbon hard sauce.

Sunset 44 is open from lunch Tuesday through Friday and for dinner daily.

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