

TIP OF MY TONGUE

Beyond steak at Seared happy hour

By **HOUSTON PORTER**
FOR THE ARGUS-COURIER

I am honored to host and write this new food column, as well as many of the farm profiles, restaurant reviews, and food event previews that will appear in this section.

I will try to stay on top of all the local food news, but that is easier said than done. If you know of upcoming restaurant openings, closings, menu changes, farm dinners or any other food related news, please help me spread the word by letting me know about them ASAP.



Houston Porter

Restaurant News

Speakeasy, the tapas bistro in Putnam Plaza, recently won their second "Best Late Night Eats" from the Press Democrat. So, the rumors that Speakeasy is closed are incorrect. Now, there was a restaurant in Novato called Speakeasy, which opened after our Speakeasy, and has since closed. Restaurateurs should be more considerate of preexisting establishments when choosing a moniker, even if their cuisine and ambiance are different.

Feeds, Fundraisers and Farm dinners

Stemple Creek Ranch hosts Chef Matthew Elias of Saltwater Oyster Depot on Saturday, Aug. 15 from 5 to 8 p.m. Thirty-two lucky guests will experience a once-in-a-lifetime local farm-to-table dinner with wine, overlooking the beautifully preserved and rehabilitated Stemple Creek.

Happy Hour Highlight

Seared actually has two happy hours on Friday and Saturday, offering a late-night 9 to 10 p.m. menu, along with their daily 4 to 6 p.m. offering.

Admittedly, it took a little while for Petaluma to warm up to Seared. But few in Petaluma know how to cater to our tastes as well as partner Ken O'Donnell of McNear's. With chef Joe creating incredibly fresh and tasty local fare, Kevin expert-

ly handling the bar, and Andrew managing the floor, Seared's five 2015 Petaluma People's Choice Awards, including for best steak, are well deserved.

If you are looking for a cool spot to host your next event, take a peek at Seared's upstairs banquet room and bar, which overlooks the Petaluma River.

Even if you miss Seared's happy hour, most of the same items appear on the regular bar menu, although the prices are different. Our favorites are the citrus-cured salmon (\$6), Kung Pao prawns (\$6), pork belly banh mi (\$5), prime rib sliders (\$5), filet mignon skewers (\$5), and Drakes Bay oysters (\$1.50).

Wash these down with a George Clooney Martini, Petaluma Lemon Drop or Seared Manhattan (\$5 each), house wine (\$4), Petaluma beers on tap (\$4) or select bottled beers for just \$2.50.

Seared's also has weekly specials: Prime Rib and Martini Monday (\$20/\$5), "Half-off Wine Wednesday with no corkage fees, and Burger n' Brew Thursday (\$15). Seafood Sunday happy hour from 4 to 6 p.m. includes draft beers (\$3), reds/whites/champagne (\$5), a killer shrimp and pork po' boy (\$7), and a fantastic daily crudo (fresh raw fish), along with other seafood dishes.

(You can reach Houston Porter at houston@avant-larde.com with any comments or food related news you would like to see appear in upcoming columns.)