

## MIAMI-DADE REVIEW

## Small plates, water view shine at Trio

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Defying its warehouse size and nightclub vibe, 3-month-old Trio on the Bay delivers what South Floridians deserve and too seldom find: well-prepared, water-side dining.

With a pink sunset to the left (ignore the WSVN-Channel 7 transmission tower) and the lights of Miami Beach to the right, twilight diners on the 10,000-square-foot patio are in for a treat. Chef Klimo Kovaceski's small-plate menu seals the show, with seafood plates fittingly dominant.

Grilled calamari steaks with white wine-lemon-butter sauce and red and banana peppers are tender and smoky. Pan-seared scallops, served atop raw spinach with smoked bacon cubes and grilled red onions, are crisp on the outside, juicy inside. Sesame-crusted tuna is fresh and perfectly cooked.

A mini-skewer trio includes mouth-making steak along with chicken and shrimp. Braised on-dive and tomatoes dressed with white truffle oil and balsamic raspberry reduction and crowned with a pistachio-crusted sphere of goat cheese makes a satisfying, sweet-salty topping for crostini.

Charmingly misshapen, thin-crust pizzas sport toppings like figs, pancetta and blue cheese, mozzarella and basil and our favorite, pesto-anchovies.

Did we mention that a complimentary basket of warm focaccia with a garlicky olive and roasted-pepper spread precedes all this?

Enemes are more hit-or-miss. Pecan-crusted river trout is a delicate hit, served with roasted sweet potatoes, smoked bacon and spinach in a warm cider vinaigrette. Grilled butcher steak with truffled fries was cooked exactly as ordered, with plenty of demi-glace for swiping.

We were less enamored of the chicken risotto, a strange combination of Southwestern flavors — arichokes, chicken chunks, roasted red peppers and far too much corn — overwhelming the Italian rice. Lamb chops served with overly sweet apricot chutney were plump but bland, as was our side-dish pick, Gruyère mac and cheese. The roasted beet salad was also a disappointment, with only three slices of beets that tasted neither fresh nor roasted.

Bay-side tables offer the best sundown view, but our favorite location was the burgundy banquettes surrounding the tiki-style outdoor bar, with overhead fans



PHOTOS BY WHITNEY GARDNER/MIAMI HERALD STAFF  
NORTH BAY VILLAGE: Executive chef Klimo Kovaceski surveys an assortment of his dishes with Trio's bay view in the background.



SMOKY AND TENDER: Trio on the Bay's grilled calamari steaks

providing a breeze. An extensive, affordable wine list and clever cocktail menu provide plenty of beverage options.

In contrast to the light touch displayed by Kovaceski, one-time chef-owner of Miami Beach's Crystal Café, Trio's interior conjures the mafia chic of South Beach's 1990s club scene. Beaded curtains, chandeliers, gilt-framed Renaissance-style paintings and

dozens of flat-screen TVs attempt to fill the 14,000-square-foot space, complete with 2,000-square-foot dance floor. (Gerry Kelly, former ringmaster at Bash, Liquid and Lux, operates the nightclub.) Young bossesses in micro-mini skirts seat guests as general manager Louie Speerini (The Waser Club) hunkers about in rectangular eye glasses and spiky black hair.

We can't comment on the pro-dance scene, but the music piped into the patio during our meals was one of the best-eating soundtracks we've heard here, melding Hot Pack standards, Michael Bublé, Bruno Mars, Chet Baker, Miles Davis, Gershwin and even some samba.

Along with Trio's playlist, we cover the recipes for two scarily good desserts: a modestly titled devil's food that's actually a super-moist chocolate lava cake burning with dark, sweet filling and a peachy bread pudding with a trio of sauces (chocolate-macadamia, crème anglaise and raspberry coulis) and juicy strawberries that made for a sweet ending second only to the dazzling sunset.

## If you go

**Place:** Trio on the Bay  
**Address:** 1601 79th Street Cswy., North Bay Village  
**Rating:** ★★★ (Very Good)  
**Contact:** 305-866-0254, [www.trioonthebay.com](http://www.trioonthebay.com)  
**Hours:** 5-10 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday (lounge open until 5 a.m. Friday-Saturday)  
**Price:** Small plates \$4-\$12, salads \$5-\$12, pizza \$10-\$12, entrees \$14-\$25, desserts \$6-\$8

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