

Shula's Steak House: A Walt Disney World Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

□As someone who doesn't eat meat, any restaurant that has the word "steak" in it doesn't instantly appeal to me, so it's taken us some time to get around to trying Shula's Steak House at the Dolphin. However, on our most recent trip to Walt Disney World, we deliberately avoided the Dining Plans for part of our stay, so we could experience some of the restaurants that don't participate in them. Having read some wonderful reviews of Shula's over the years, this had been on my list for some time, and I was delighted to finally get to try it.

□When we walked in, I will confess it wasn't the ambience I was expecting. I knew nothing of the history of Shula's, and was only going on the prices on the menu, so I was expecting some very upscale, and was a bit surprised to see sports memorabilia everywhere. Our server quickly explained the background about Don Shula, as I'm ashamed to say I had no idea who he was. Does the fact we're British act as mitigation for that fact?!

□Now one thing I will warn any other non-meat eaters about is that your servers (we had two of them) will bring round a plastic selection of meat to demonstrate the various cuts you can have. I diverted my eyes and tried not to think about it too much, and instead focused on the menu. There was certainly plenty to look at, and between appetizers, soups, and salads, there were something like 15 choices, many perfect for me. Items I could have gone for included the colossal shrimp cocktail, pan seared scallops, shellfish trio, lobster bisque, French onion soup, traditional Caesar salad, or the tomato and mozzarella chopped salad. In the end, I opted for the jumbo lump crab cake with remoulade sauce, which was absolutely exquisite.

□My husband wasn't quite so lucky, and opted for the barbequed shrimp stuffed with basil, wrapped in Applewood smoked bacon tossed in a tangy BBQ sauce. He didn't feel the flavors went together as well as he would have liked, but then again, he did know he was trying something very different. Other meat appetizer options when we dined at Shula's included the premium black Angus steak tartare, and the wedge salad, which included Applewood smoked bacon. As you can see, the appetizers were very fish heavy, which was a pleasant surprise for a steak house.

□ So did I fare when it came to the entrees? Well, better than you might think. Tempting as the Australian lobster tail 24-28ozs was, at \$130 I figured it could stay tempting, as could the four pound Maine lobster at \$95. I remembered the gag in my trusty PassPorter about if you needed to ask the market price of the daily market fish, you probably couldn't afford it, so I didn't bother, instead opting for the pan seared sea scallops. Now you may have noticed these were an appetizer dish as well, and there was a fair bit of this, given that the jumbo lump crab cakes I'd started off with were also on the entree menu.

□ My scallops were served over roasted corn, and topped with a beurre blanc sauce. As my French grandmother was the Queen of beurre blanc sauce, I knew this would allow me to judge just how good Shula's was, plus of course you make a mistake with scallops, you're going to know about it. I ended up substituting the base of this dish out for garlic mashed potatoes, as the roasted corn included the omnipresent Appelwood smoked bacon. I have to say Shula's did shine with this, as the scallops were cooked beautifully, and the sauce was just how I remembered it from my childhood.

□ My meat loving husband of course had to go for one of the Shula cuts, and after much debate, he went for the 16oz New York strip steak. I told him I didn't mind what he went for, I just expected him to ensure he ate all of it, and didn't waste it. I don't mind paying good money for good food (his entree was \$49), but I do at least want to see a clean plate! I have to say the money didn't go to waste, and everything was devoured, and I have heard nothing but compliments ever since about the steak he had at Shula's, so I can only assume it was very good…

□ Other steak options included the 10oz or 12oz filet mignon, the 20z Kansas City strip, 22oz Cowboy ribeye, or the famous 48oz Porterhouse. I already knew that if you managed to polish this off, your name gets put on their wall of fame, but I was shocked to discover from our servers that the recipients of this honor included an eight-year-old boy, and a woman in her 80s.

□ At least I think I heard that right! If steak or fish isn't your thing, you could always opt for the chicken breast or the lamb porterhouse, but as you can see, those are the two main draws on the menu here.

□ Side dishes were not cheap here, ranging from \$9 to \$15 for the crab macaroni and cheese. Had I not had the crab cakes to start off, I probably would have tried this, but opted for the creamed spinach, which was wonderful. My husband had the garlic mashed potatoes and had no complaints. I will say here that, while they're expensive, you do get a lot for your money. Other items available included broccoli, baked

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potato, sauteed mushrooms, potato gratin, and roasted corn, albeit with red bell pepper and Applewood smoked bacon. If you're thinking that last item showed up a lot on the menu, you'd be right!

□ We were asked about our dessert choices when we ordered our entrees, as a few of them need to be ordered at the same time, as they take so long to prepare. My husband tried the chocolate souffle, but was disappointed by it, as it was lacking in the lovely oozing liquid center you get at Palo on board the Disney cruise ships.

□ My choice of the crème brulee trio was a bit of a mixed bag too. I found the chocolate one to be a bit too rich for me, while the vanilla one was very pleasant, and the orange and Grand Marnier one was the absolute winner. Again, there was a good selection on the dessert menu, with apple crisp, molten chocolate lava cake, carrot cake, key lime pie, and seven layer chocolate cake making up just some of the other choices.

□ The food had turned out to be excellent, and the service was superb, with both Don and Dave on hand whenever we needed them. We both found the place to be noisier than we'd expected for what's essentially a signature restaurant, and although I fully understand the sports theming to it now and the reason why a lot of people were arriving casually dressed, for me, a meal of this quality and price deserves the respect of dressing up a bit. It's not a cheap night out, but it's a very good night out, and somewhere we will no doubt be returning to, given the continuing rave reviews of the Shula's steak from my husband!

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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