

## Never Off-Limits Ta-boo's culinary delights not just for the rich and famous

Palm Beach Post  
Restaurant Critic, Paul Reid

Everybody should go to Ta-boo at least once. It is a place like no other.

Everyone who is someone, and many who aspire to be, will dine here, sooner or later. People go to be seen, to see, to over hear juicy conversations. They go because Ta-boo has a reputation that borders on legend. They go because it is friendly, mellow, lacking in pretense. And its cozy dining rooms are quite pleasing to the eye.

But mostly they go for two reasons: superb food and service.

Without those active ingredients, Ta-boo would just be another place, albeit, a place often frequented by men and women who are well-endowed financially, some who pretend to be and certain women who add new dimension to the words Silicon Valley. These are the folks made infamous in last year's bestselling book *The Season*, by Ron Kessler.

But mostly, the diners at Ta-boo are just regular folks out for a good meal.

Regardless of your status, know this: The maitre d' will make you feel as if Ta-boo were built for you alone. In the finest Old World tradition, he is supremely adept at pleasing everybody. At Ta-boo, you are always somebody, and that's the way it should be, because you are somebody: a customer.

I like to sit at the bar late on a hot afternoon, early of an evening, have a bacon cheeseburger (\$9.95), medium rare on a crusty roll. Some nights a plate of Norwegian smoked salmon (\$11.75), maybe a beer with my burger, a cool glass of chardonnay with my fish. Small pizzas -- pepperoni, portobello, smoked salmon -- available, too, in the \$7-\$11 range. And you thought the place was just for fancy types in search of fancy food. The burger is up there on my list of the top-five burgers in the county.

Or Sunday brunch -- all the usual suspects: eggs Benedict, waffles, fresh fruit salads, and dozens of chilled white wines and champagnes, all very fairly priced.

Then, a window-shopping stroll down Worth Avenue, maybe to the beach, take off the shoes, walk up to The Breakers.

Or reserve a table in one of the four dining rooms, three in the rear, one up front. Thick linens, spotless glassware glowing in the soft, golden light. The front room feels like an English garden room. Throughout, a romantic, smart, sort of old club feel, but not a threadbare old Yankee club. More of a cheerful old San Francisco club. A fireplace is the centerpiece in one room, lovely wallpaper prints, delicate chandeliers, fresh flowers on all tables. Always bustling but never raucous.

And what to eat? Anything. When in season you must devour the luscious, cold, sweet and large stone crab claws. Enough to share. Market price, around \$35-\$45 per full dinner, \$23, appetizer, but there's enough for two. Or a chilled succulent half Maine lobster and chicken salad atop baby greens (\$17.95). Or the open-face New York strip steak sandwich (\$15.95), served with the best homemade potato chips anywhere -- an ethereal stack of crisp, warm, salty, pure delight. And if crab cakes are available, grab them.

There's always a selection of pasta and fresh fish. The linguine with fresh broccoli rabe, crushed red pepper and virgin olive oil (\$15.50) is simple, yet elegant. I enjoyed on one solo visit the Chilean sea bass provencal (\$28.50), an honest and hearty fish topped with capers, kalamata olives and fresh tomatoes.

Service is commensurate with the food. That is, service is prompt, polite, professional, friendly. Understated efficiency comes to mind. Plates will not linger, water glasses will be filled, bread baskets topped off.

Desserts. A treat, as they should be. The apple cobbler (\$7.50) was stuffed with fresh chunky apples. And the Ta-boo lust (\$6.75) is a wicked variation on coconut cream pie -- robust shortbread crust, thick coconut pudding, fresh whipped cream, flavorful to the max.

So, there you have it. That's why everybody should visit Ta-boo at least once. But once is not enough. You'll be back.

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**RESTAURANT REVIEW**

Ta-Boo

FOOD -- 3 and 1/2 Stars

SERVICE -- 3 and 1/2 Stars

ADDRESS: 221 Worth Avenue, Palm Beach

TELEPHONE: 561-835-3500

PRICE RANGE: Many options, from moderate to expensive.

HOURS: Daily, lunch: 11:30am - 5pm; dinner: 5 - 11pm

RESERVATIONS: yes

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: yes

NONSMOKING: yes

**WHAT THE STARS MEAN**

4 Stars - Extraordinary

3 Stars - Excellent

2 Stars - Average

1 Star - Needs Work