



(TV Diner) - Striking an appealing pose on the shore of Lake Nipmuc in Mendon, Massachusetts is Alicante. Debonair decor highlight two sweeping dining rooms and an eye-catching bar adds to the old world charm of this stylish establishment offering Spanish, Mediterranean and Iberian cuisine.

Alicante is a well-known Blackstone Valley favorite and as we discovered, for a number of very good reasons, beginning with the outstanding brocheta - bourbon marinated beef tenderloin with grape tomatoes and fresh mozzarella, kissed by dense balsamic vinegar.

And the lettuce wraps are the very definition of "wow." Crisp iceberg cups heaped with grilled chicken, roasted peppers, white kidney beans, goat cheese and toasted almonds made for a flavor explosion, bite after scrumptious bite.

On to a seared haddock filet simmered with shrimp in a lemon, wine and caper reduction. Served with crisp vegetables and seasoned rice, this beautiful plate was a perfect balance of nutrition.

That "wow" factor struck again with the pork tenderloin stuffed with apples, golden onions, feta cheese and dried cherries, then wrapped with apple wood smoked bacon and finished with a roasted garlic balsamic reduction. Simply amazing.

Desserts at Alicante are equally as impressive as the appetizers and entrees.

We tucked into a tall, dark and handsome chocolate mousse pie and enjoyed every morsel.

But the bananas foster cheesecake really stole our hearts. A base of buttery cheesecake topped by vanilla ice cream and caramelized banana slices was nothing short of heavenly.

Alicante offers extraordinary value with appetizers and salads \$5 to \$10; entrees from \$17 to \$25 and desserts averaging \$7.

Service is also praiseworthy. Everyone from the gracious host to our personable waiter to the efficient staff members who made sure our water glasses and bread basket were never empty all seemed intent on making our dining experience one to remember.

They achieved that goal, earning Alicante the rare Platinum Plate. Open Wednesday through Sunday for dinner, Alicante is located at 84 Uxbridge Road - that's Route 16 - in Mendon, Massachusetts. Call 508-634-8188 or check out the full menu online at www.alicantema.com