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## Chalk

 Posted by [pcampbell](#) August 27th, 2009, 2:44 pm

Posting about the beet cocktail reminded that I was gone last Friday, and didn't link to the actual Chalk review. and since then I've been sick and so has our website. So, here it is. It ran last Friday.

### Chef at Chalk salutes seasons with smart, skillful creations

 By Polly Campbell • [pcampbell@enquirer.com](mailto:pcampbell@enquirer.com) • August 21, 2009

Cooking with local ingredients, and therefore changing menus with the seasons, may be trendy right now, but it has its risks. Customers returning to try a favorite dish may find it gone, replaced with the chef's inspiration of the month. A reviewer visits, and the menu changes the next day. That just happened at Chalk Food + Wine in Covington. I am about to describe some delicious dishes that you will no longer be able to order. assume, however, that the new menu is just as delicious and suitable to the next season. I know I'd love to go back to see what Chef Mark Bodenstein will do when using a different market basket of local ingredients.

Bodenstein came to the Relish Group's Chalk from NuVo. He changed his menu seasonally there, too, and served arrestingly contemporary, almost experimental dishes. At Chalk, he's backed away from that edge a little. You're now more likely to notice the skill and appropriateness of his techniques and combinations, though they are still interesting.

We walked through the sophisticated-bistro interior of Chalk, past the dark wood booths and the black-and-white illustrations of food, to sit in the back garden under a wisteria arbor. From the new craft cocktail list, I had a gin and tonic tinged to a mesmerizing purple with beet syrup. Yes, beet, and yes, it was wonderful.

The cantaloupe gazpacho (\$7) was the summeriest appetizer: so cool and fresh it was like air-conditioning blowing off the bowl. My charcuterie plate (\$14) was a mix of thinly sliced chorizo, house-made pork pate, goose liver mousse, mustard and pickles – variety making my favorite kind of appetizer.

I was, however, a little jealous of the lobster risotto (\$13) on my friend's plate. The rice was exactly al dente, each grain distinct but bound to its neighbor in creamy cohesion, studded with chunks of lobster and decorated with golden local chanterelles.

There was the same swoon-worthiness in the naturally sweet corn emulsion beneath crisp-crust scallops (\$26). Another excellent bow to the season was the sliced steak salad (\$20), served upside-down, with the steak and delicious, meaty roasted peppers hiding under a cover of soft butterhead lettuce. Wild walleye (\$27) was perfectly crusted and cooked, served with a micro green and tomato salad.

My pork tenderloin (\$25) was a little small, and slightly tough. It sat atop a "cassoulet" – not exactly, but a delicious, homely medley of various beans: green and wax and lima. I could have mixed in the knob of roasted-corn butter, but I liked the way it gradually melted and improved the dish.

I will stop telling you about things you can't have and will feel sorry for you if the cheesecake with caramel is not on the menu – or the warmed blueberries with barely a crust, topped with peach ice cream. Perhaps you can try the tart key lime pie or almost-too-rich flourless chocolate cake.

We ordered all four desserts (\$8-\$9), and our server chose which to give to whom. She was a real asset to our dinner, rising to friendly banter while taking care of everything. Let's hope they don't change her, or the kitchen staff, with the seasons.



### About Me

Polly Campbell is paid to obsess about food, but she would anyway. She has been The Enquirer's restaurant critic since 1996, and the food writer since 2004. She ate her first five-way in 1983 at the Ludlow Ave. Skyline.

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### Chalk Food + Wine



**Where:** 318 Greenup St., Covington

**When:** 5:30-9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 5:30-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Bar opens 4:30 p.m. daily.

**The scene:** Lots of group of young people, a small and friendly bar area

**Reservations:** taken

**Prices:** Appetizers \$7-\$14; Entrées \$20-\$27; Desserts \$8-\$9

**Vegetarian choices:** Several, including mushroom ragout on pasta

**Miscellaneous:** Accessible to disabled, outdoor dining, private room

**Phone:** 859-643-1234

**Web site:** [www.chalkfoodwine.com](http://www.chalkfoodwine.com)



poor;



fair;



good;



excellent;



extraordinary

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**NoKyNative** wrote:

Polly, when reading your review I had hoped that you didn't receive special service at Chalk but after my experience this past Friday night I'm beginning to think that you did. Our service was Terrible; I actually had to stop another waiter & ask her to find mine since ours seemed to have "disappeared". They brought me the glass of wine that I ordered to have with my meal After I was finished with my entree and our food was not so much subtle as it was bland. A true disappointment as we've thoroughly enjoyed meals there in the past.

8/31/2009 2:31:29 PM

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