



## Sophisticated Steaks Spencer's at the Hilton Orlando

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> One look at the Hilton Orlando's new steak and chophouse, Spencer's, and there's a moment where everything you know about steakhouses is called into question. Sophisticated and elegant – without being stuffy – Spencer's atmosphere is relaxed. The Hilton Orlando, with the restaurant's General Manager and sommelier, Don Brookshire, rediscovers the American steakhouse and transforms it.

The kitchen at Spencer's is under the supervision of Chef Michael Broderick, whose imaginative take on classic American food brings a sense of whimsy to the plate. The appetizer selection is wide and primes the palate for the main experience. Don't shy away from the oysters in the fall and winter. Spencer's chooses lovely Wianno oysters, served on coarse rock salt with a cracked pepper-shallot mignonette, that slurp down smooth as silk. The Shrimp and Crab Cake with Chipotle Remoulade and Lemon Arugula Salad is a fantastic way to bring the senses alive with the rich flavors of ocean-

fresh crab and spicy heat from the smoked jalapeño peppers in the sauce.

Salad is also elevated to a modern twist at Spencer's. While they, of course, serve the steakhouse staples like the classic chophouse tossed salad (which Chef Broderick affectionately calls, "the kitchen sink salad" because it contains everything but...well...you know), Spencer's also serves a brilliant take on Gazpacho, the cold summer soup. The Gazpacho Salad is one of those rare and delicate "composed" salads where each ingredient is to be eaten on one forkful to experience the full effect of the salad. Ripe grape tomatoes are combined with cold cucumber and red onion with cilantro vinaigrette. It tastes exactly like a well-made gazpacho in the peak of the summer months: refreshing, cool, and invigorating. Paired with un-oaked white wine like Cakebread Chardonnay, this pairing sings sweetly.

Spencer's is one of the few steakhouses in Orlando to serve dry-aged beef. During

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the aging process, juices are absorbed into the meat, enhancing the flavor and tenderizing the steaks. These steaks, especially the Prime Cut 14oz. Ribeye and the 12oz. New York Strip, are not only dry-aged but grass-fed, capturing more natural flavor of the beef in every bite. Spencer's also offers a lovely, most tender loin of heirloom Kurobuta pork, meltingly tender and happily paired with tart cherry compote.

Side dishes at Spencer's are creations in and of themselves, enhancing the flavor of the meats perfectly. Roasted fingerling potatoes are doused in stone-ground mustard, making for a filling and flavorful accompaniment. Sautéed wild mushrooms fulfill the earthy umami quotient. The Loaded Hash Browns are extremely well made – crusty and brown on the outside and fluffy white on the inside – don't miss them. If you're nervous about ordering Ravenswood wines, don't shy away from the Pickberry-Sonoma Mountain Red, a blend of Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon. It's a mar-

velous, drinkable accompaniment to any entrée at Spencer's.

Dessert is an occasion. Something was lost in translation when management told Spencer's Austrian pastry chef to create a "mud pie." He was told to put ice cream in a cake form and crust it with cookies. What resulted is a monstrous ice cream tower with three luscious flavors in a chocolate cookie crust. It's impossible to miss when you see it being delivered to a nearby table; you'll have to have one. The Deconstructed Bananas Foster is a real slice of the Big Easy and the oven-roasted Strawberries mixed with kaffir lime-scented crème fraiche are a light and satisfying way to end the evening.

If you're, miraculously, hungry for a little more, don't forget the after-dinner libations. The bar at Spencer's does a fantastic job of not only recreating the classics like Vesper and Sidecar, but their dessert drinks can't be beat. Instead of plain coffee, live a little and order a Coffee Nut martini, Van Gogh

Double Espresso Vodka, a bit of Frangelico and layered with Bailey's infused heavy cream. This drink is memorable and you'll find yourself dipping your finger into the whipped cream, pulling out every little bit from your glass.

Under a modern gaze, Spencer's is a gleaming vision of what steakhouses in the new millennia should be. Elegantly appointed with knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff, the passion shines in the service and on the plate. After a long day of meetings at the neighboring Convention Center or wherever your office may be, Spencer's is an ideal place to relax, enjoy one of their 20 by-the-glass wines and celebrate carnivorous bliss.<

Spencer's for Steaks and Chops  
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