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WEEKLY LUNCH PICK

October 2009

Reds Bistro and Wine Bar

A \$35 table d'hôte makes one of Bay Street's priciest—and most delicious—lunch spots accessible to those without an expense account **By Renee Suen**



For the bird: Maple glazed quail is reason alone to visit Reds—but it was just the beginning
Image credit: Renee Suen

The place: With wood trim and stone walls, **Reds** brings an Aspen vibe to the financial district. The main floor's marble-topped bar and sleek tables make it the perfect spot for a stylish meal, but the booths in the upper level are better for pitching some serious woo (whether it's business or romance).

The crowd: A sea of consultants, lawyers and C-level Bay Streeters—all in dark, crisp suits—magically flood the tables as the clock strikes 12.

The deal: Executive chef Michael Steh uses fresh, seasonal ingredients in dishes that are inspired by the world's finest wine regions. While the à la carte menu requires an expense account, the three-course table d'hôte menu (\$35) with optional wine pairings (\$55) is an affordable way to access one of downtown's poshest restaurants.

The meal: Our golden pancetta-squash risotto starter is a harbinger of great things to come. The silky caramelized onions are like candy, but the dish's most captivating element is a maple-glazed quail grilled to juicy perfection. Next up, a 10-ounce Cumbrae cross rib with an unctuous red wine glaze arrives on a sweet mash of parsnip and celery root, alongside tender sautéed brussels sprouts. A cool roasted pumpkin pot de crème is topped with excellent ginger tuile cookies filled with ethereal bourbon Chantilly.

The time: 64 minutes of refined luxury.

The cost: \$50, including tax, tip and a bottle of sparkling water (\$7.50, split).

Reds Bistro and Wine Bar, 77 Adelaide St. W. (at Bay), 416-862-7337, redsbistro.com.

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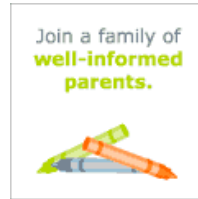
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