

Ten  
Twenty  
Post

Oyster Bar - Bistro

making "the scene"  
TEN TWENTY POST, DARIEN

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**SPOILER ALERT**

*I'm a food writer, so I eat out often. But I go to Ten Twenty Post even when I don't have to.*

**1.**

It's Sunday Brunch and Ten Twenty Post has a full bar featuring bright orange Mimosas and ruby red Bloody Marys. To accompany one of those popular drinks, cake-like French toast with Vermont maple syrup garnished with vibrant fresh berries, and the "Portuguesa Breakfast Plate" with grilled linguica and pepper-onion-cheese "scramble" are the dishes of choice.

**2.**

The girls are doing "lunch" - the way it is intended to be. A few glasses of "Chardy" sets the tone, as does the high energy of Ten Twenty Post on any given afternoon. Arriving from the immaculate open pantry kitchen are fried whole-belly clams with tangy tarter sauce, chilled poached salmon with shrimp and cucumber salad with fresh dill dressing, and a Parisian style ham and Gruyère sandwich with caramelized onions and Dijon mustard - think "panini," only better.

**3.**

After a demanding work day, cocktails are calling my name. My companion and I greet Seth, Ten Twenty Post's manager extraordinaire, and make our way through the crowd to see barkeeps Rick and Chris at the popular zinc bar. Dirty martinis are served. With attitude adjustments in place, we sink into our surroundings and hobnob with the rest of the restaurant's fan base whom we've come to know and enjoy.

**4.**

We have a hankering for French food. Real French food. It starts out with the restaurant's signature P.E.I. mussels steamed with tomatoes and herb-cream topped with fried capers and served with a side of pommes frites. Mussels are plump, herb cream is flavorful, and fries are crisp and slightly salty, the way they should be. My favorite frisee salad with "crispy" poached egg, lardons (better than bacon), blue cheese and croutons is next, and it does not disappoint. Chef's deep-fried poached egg trick with its consistently runny center never gets old to me. We end with a buttery pan-seared trout with capers, crispy skin and all. We wash it down with a deep white burgundy - ain't nothing wrong with this picture.

LEFT: Picnic baskets for gourmet outings.  
 OPPOSITE TOP: The main dining area and the long table, perfect for socializing at meals.  
 OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Chilled Poached Salmon with potato sticks and shrimp-cucumber salad drizzled with dill oil





While it may be true that restaurants simply can't be all things to all people, Darien's Ten Twenty Post, Oyster Bar-Bistro has no trouble covering all the bases. Under the umbrella of the Pearl Restaurant Group, responsible for six area dining and gathering destinations, including Elm Street Oyster Bar in Greenwich and The Rye Grill & Bar in Rye, New York, Ten Twenty Post is located in the newly developed brick walk section on the Post Road, across from the Darien Train Station. The restaurant's understated façade gives way to a bright and airy dining room and bar, replete with classic black and white tile flooring, coffered ceilings, dark wood furnishings, red leather back banquette seating, and a high-top communal table that is the centerpiece of the restaurant. The décor is modest, but charming, and brings to life that of an urban bistro.

Chef Roland Coulombe does an amazing job with the restaurant's seafood driven menu, pulling from his long culinary history in Maine. Sure, there's plenty of authentic bistro fare including steak frites, bouillabaisse, and *cassoulet*, but the raw bar selections such as a variety of oysters that changes with the tides, and an array of fresh fish (often 6-8 varieties) prepared to your liking, hits all the right notes.

The menu is large and reflects Chef's New England flair, along with an understanding of what Ten Twenty's customers have come to expect and enjoy. The fact that diners can choose the type of culinary experience they would like to have at any given time in the same restaurant is a rarity. Here, they can grab a quick and healthful grilled tuna Nicoise salad, juicy burger, or house cured salmon BLT before catching a movie just as easily as they can plan a fancy birthday celebration with friends over pan-fried oysters, French onion soup blanketed with melting Gruyère cheese, tender steak au poivre, and the most outrageously decadent chocolate pot de crème imaginable for dessert.

## FIN.

It's summer and the patio is open. Shaded by an umbrella, it's time to linger over a cold Belgium lager, spicy oyster shooter, pan-fried crab cakes, and seared sea scallops with seasonal fruit salsa. Life is good – and Ten Twenty Post makes it better.

*Ten Twenty Post*  
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LEFT: Moules et Frites, prepared 1020-style with fried capers, tomatoes and a herb-cream.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Two-Tiered Froid et Cru (Chilled and Raw) Seafood Platter with jumbo shrimp, New England Lobster, littleneck clams and Northrop's "Bloody Mary" Westport - Blue Point oyster shooters. Executive Chef Roland Coulombe feeling 'at home' with lobsters and crustaceans from New England waters.

