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RHODYLIFE

Fall is perfect time for Matunuck Oyster Bar



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by **DON FOWLER**

When I asked Joyce where she wanted to dine on her 80th birthday, there was no hesitation – Matunuck Oyster Bar!

An easy ride south down Interstate 95 to Route 4 to East Matunuck Road, past the colorful trees takes you to the restaurant and oyster farm.

It was 4 p.m. on a warm and sunny late October day. The parking lot was already full and cars were starting to line up along the road. The popular restaurant is no longer just a summer tourist destination.

It wasn't long ago when the restaurant was a small bar and dining area. In the last two years a second floor and a deck on top of that were added.

Additional seating has expanded on the porch and under a large tent, complete with heat lamps.

We requested a table for two overlooking the oyster pond, enjoying a perfect view.

Take-out orders were lined up on the closed bar as we passed the oyster shuckers and took our socially distanced seats.

You have to start off your meal with the best Bloody Mary in Rhode Island. (Sorry, Twin Oaks. You are still No. 2.) The tall drink comes with a huge celery stick, lemon, olive and oyster. It is spicy and delicious.

The raw bar features a "Buck a Shuck" Monday through Thursday, with Matunuck oysters only a dollar each. But this was Friday, so we chose the Oyster Sampler, an assortment of a dozen local oysters for \$24. We enjoyed the large Quonset ones and of course the in-house grown Matunuck ones best.

I chose one of the restaurant's specialties – Jambalaya, consisting of tender, juicy fried oysters, two jumbo shrimp, chicken and a spicy andouille sausage in a Cajun tomato sauce over rice (\$21.95).

Joyce topped off her oyster evening with fried oysters, lightly fried to perfection, with fries, coleslaw and remoulade sauce (\$22.95). After you have eaten Matunuck's fried oysters, you will not want to order them anywhere else.

I do have one idiosyncrasy – I love French fries with remoulade sauce, stealing half of Joyce's.

We usually do not order dessert, but it was Joyce's birthday, so she indulged in the very sinful flourless chocolate torte with raspberry puree and whipped cream (\$6.95).

I do want to return for lunch and try their Oyster Stew, which is made with sweet potatoes, parsnips, leeks and bacon and simmered in a rich rosemary cream with herb butter poached oysters (\$14.95).

The extensive menu also includes scallops, tuna, salmon, lobster, king crab, whole belly clams and fish and chips, and saw some appetizing dishes being served.

But when you go to a steak house, your order steak. When we go to an oyster bar, we order oysters.

Keywords

restaurants, dining

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