



Mickey Naouai

VERTIGO RESTAURANT, BAR & NIGHTCLUB

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For Chef Mickey Naouai the challenge was there the moment he walked through the doors of Vertigo in the quaint Hudson River village of Nyack. "When Zagat gives Vertigo the high rating of 25 for its spectacular décor, I am thinking the food needs to match that every day," says Chef Naouai, who is responsible for Vertigo's extensive menu.

Like the stunning three levels of European art nouveau interior of Vertigo where every detail was uniquely designed, Chef Naouai approaches each menu item with the right combination of ingredients mastered together to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. Simple red raspberries, for example, make all the difference in his wild berry sauce poured over his succulent breast of Barbary duck served with summer baby vegetables and saffron rice.

Chef Naouai's love for food started as a boy when watching his mother cook in his home in Tunisia, which is on the Mediterranean coast of North Africa. He recalls the story of working in France at a restaurant called La Belle Epoque when one evening the chef was a no-show. Mickey came forward and told the manager that he had memorized the chef's every recipe and stepped in that evening and instantly became a professional chef. Naouai later landed in New York to continue his culinary career at George Martin Restaurant and with Chef DePasquale of Delices de La Cote Basque. After 20 years owning NYC eateries and selling his Greenwich Village restaurant Pamela's, he was recruited to take over the kitchen at Vertigo.

"They don't make it easy for me here," jokes Chef Naouai. "First, I have to compete with Vertigo's décor and now I just learned our chief bartender Anjo Duffy was named best bartender in Rockland for his signature martinis."

Vertigo co-owner Leslie McGettigan kindly reminds Chef Mickey, as he calls him, that his accolades come every day from Vertigo customers who rave about his dishes and come back again and again. "I have had more unsolicited compliments about our current menu than any time since we opened two years ago," says a delighted McGettigan.

Vertigo's menu (vertigonyack.com), priced from \$15, features more than 20 seasonal entrees such as Chilean sea bass in a scampi sauce; jumbo scallops flambéed in cognac; pistachio crusted rack of lamb; broiled filet mignon with a morel demi glace; breast of chicken sautéed in a sherry vinegar cream sauce, and handmade lobster ravioli.