

Buzzards' cowboy cuisine takes upscale fork in the trail

KATHY RICHARDIER
FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

Buzzards has been Stuart Allan's Cookshack and Waterin' Hole for, oh, about 24 years.

It's been a good place to chow down on "cowboy cuisine" and get your fill of beer from around the world, the likes of which you had never seen before in these parts: Grozet Gooseberry Ale, Crazy Ed's Chili Beer, Mississippi Mud, Okocim — you name it, Buzzards had it.

Buzzards still has it. And a lot more, including some decent wine, though the beer list prevails. Buzzards is also in the throes of change. A new chef hails from Teatro, and our charming, funny server, Laurent, joins Buzzards from Centini.

There is a new menu, much scaled down and tarted up with interesting, non-cowboy food, or food for the "New Age" cowboy, perhaps.

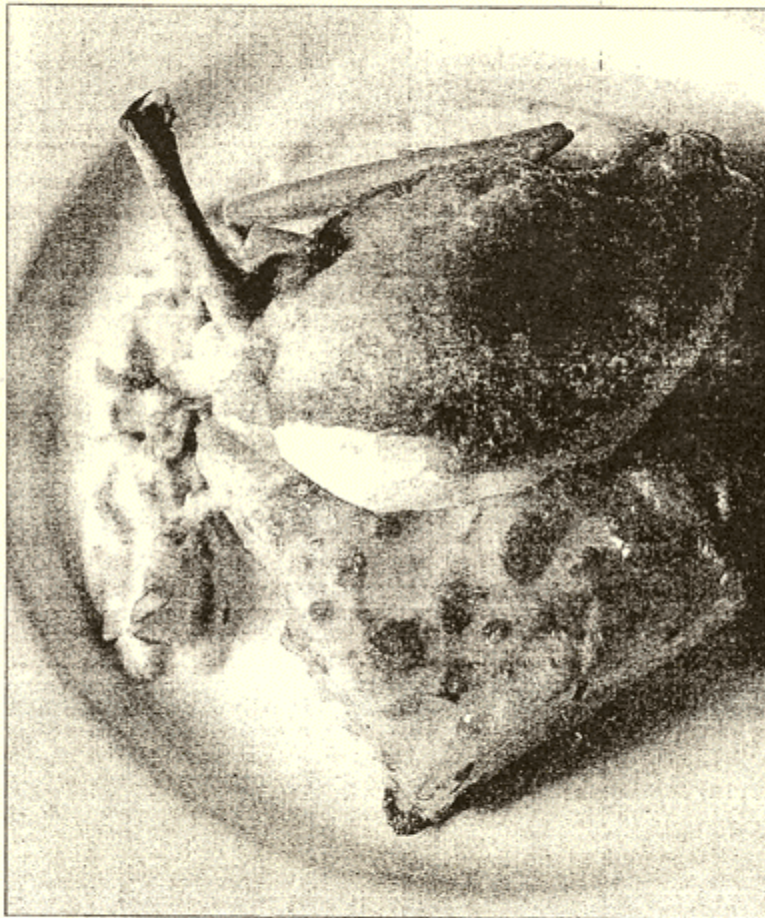
And the top of the menu says Buzzards Restaurant.

You'll still find some ranch house food — steaks and burgers, buffalo, meat loaf and ribs — but you'll be able to stray from cowboy cuisine if that isn't what suits you, i.e. the blackened catfish (which came highly recommended).

It's served with lemon marmalade and creamy leeks — we tried the marmalade and thought it would be perfect with the meat loaf), maple-glazed salmon and buffalo ravioli (also highly recommended).

Buffalo "Yorkshire pudding" is served up in an escargot dish, a far better use for it than for snails, in my opinion.

Mini-puds are stuffed with buffalo, drizzled with jus, side of dressed greens (\$7). Roasted corn is deliciously creamed into soup form, a bite of chipotle chile, and drizzled with crema and chive oil (\$5), and the



Leah Hennel, Calgary Herald

Yes, they serve chicken at Buzzards — with block potatoes in this case.

salad greens are fresh and crisp, sprouts tossed in for effect, creamy house dressing on the side (\$3.50).

Ellen chose the traditional St. Louis Pork Ribs, with a whisky barbecue glaze, caramelized-onion mashed and red cabbage braised with cranberries (\$22).

Great ribs. Succulent meat pulls off

the bones just right and there's just enough glaze to dress them up appealingly and get your fingers just a little sticky. Finger bowls would be

Buzzards Restaurant

140 10th Ave. S.W.

263-7900

Food: Good

Service: Attentive, delightful

Specialty: Old-style and New Age cowboy cuisine

Prices: \$12 to \$22 dinner mains

Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sunday to Tuesday; 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday; 11:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday

Credit: Visa, MasterCard, Amex, Interac

Reservations: Accepted

Parking: On-street, nearby lots

Wheelchair access: Steps at entrance

Washrooms: Clean, no wheelchair facilities

No-smoking area: No smoking at all (you can smoke in Bottlescrew Bill's pub next door)

Licensed: Yes

nice, since there are now cloth napkins at the duded-up ranch house tables. On the other hand, you could just lick your fingers, like they do down on the ranch.

Moving away from this formerly meat-centred menu, a salmon filet (just on the other side of overcooked) is given a sweet touch with its maple glaze, and it leans against sticky rice perched on seared spinach leaves (\$17).

An interesting element on this plate is creamed julienned carrot — a tasty variation for this all-too-ubiquitous and indifferently treated veg. Upscale "ranch" food.

An individual molton chocolate cake (\$6.50) oozed richness from its core and had us oozing out of Buzzards, well stuffed.

If you're not a beer drinker, a short wine list offers variety and reasonable prices.

But you can BYOW for a corkage fee of \$10. Good show, as usual, Stuart.