

Wit & Wisdom offers hearthside charm

By Father Leo Patalinghug

Colder and melancholic weather within this dignified liturgical season of Advent led me to a fine dining restaurant offering great ambiance, familiar and comforting foods, all elevated with technique and elegance.

The upscale Wit & Wisdom Tavern by Michael Mina – appropriately located in a hotel dedicated to the seasons, the Four Seasons Hotel, gives discriminating and willing-to-pay diners a delicious meal and a reflective experience.

Dim but elegant lighting enhanced by the four bar-side fireplaces plus a large hearth with a wrap-around couch gives a feel of a ski lodge resort. There's also a big wood-burning oven in the dining area where chefs prepare part of the meal. The fixtures and decorative appointments are finely tuned, sleek, fresh and posh, striking the balance between cozy and classy. The wall of windows showing off Harbor East makes this a hot spot for year-round dining.

The food, like the décor, offers high-minded-food lovers unique, playful and smart interpretations of classic flavors, proudly exploring local ingredients for that farm-to-table freshness. The one-page seasonal menu avoids monotony and keeps a diner's interest. Appetizers range from roasted bone marrow, octopus, beets, tripe and a vermouth cream oyster stew – all delicious, comforting and plated with finesse. Entrees include a classic crab cake (proudly handpicked meat from a long-time local seafood monger), a succulent pork dish, roasted lamb, sweet lobster, savory rotisserie chicken and signature steaks that rival any steakhouse. Most main courses come complete, but they also serve a la carte side dishes portioned to share.

For dessert, the pastry chef – a noted Food & Wine Magazine “Rising Star” – produced a chocolate dessert bowl filled with rich flavors