

Villa

by: Suz Pisano

This month our review takes us to my neighborhood—the South Side where you’ll be surprised to hear about a fabulous new “White Hot” night spot that serves up not only great drinks but some fabulous food as well. I’m proud to tell you about Villa Southside, located at the corner of 19th & Carson Streets. With a late night menu that beats any bar food, great service, friendly bartenders and an atmosphere straight out of New York City, this is a place that even us “slightly older” folks can still feel cool hanging with the young crowd.

The entire structure has been completely renovated from a former restaurant to a bar with several comfort zones. They built an open air deck that rivals any I’ve seen and the open air feeling makes the upstairs bar & dance floor that much more popular. Villa does have a dress code, they explain it’s similar to the standard—no baggy oversized clothes, no athletic wear, no ball caps but the rule I like the best when dressed to my best is “no smoking” anywhere inside the establishment at any time. Villa doesn’t even like smoking on their rooftop deck. I have to say it definitely does make for a much cleaner environment and the furniture surely won’t have nasty burn holes.



I can’t wait to tell you about the wonderful tapas we tried, but first—let me mention the drinks! Mike, our “Mad Mixologist” for the evening served up some pretty sweet (meaning specialty) martinis. We’re talking Key Lime, Dirty Banana & Pomegranate concoctions that we were literally fighting over at the bar! It was such a nice mixture of martinis and a great representation of the kind of drinks Villa can wow you with. Mike (super

cute & single!) explained that they care about the quality and use only the best of the name brand mixers in their soda guns. It does make a difference, the drinks are fabulous. Now let’s get to the food.....

First let me tell you that the full Villa menu is available online. Here’s just a taste of the not only delicious but beautifully presented plates. Jennifer’s favorite was the Pasta Roll Giovanni (\$7), baked pasta layered with sautéed spinach, prosciutto, mozzarella and ricotta cheese, rolled pinwheel style, served over Rosa sauce. This dish would make a nice light dinner as the portion was generous. I would order it along side the Stuffed Banana Peppers (\$9) breaded banana peppers, stuffed with a blend of pork, veal, and beef, fried golden, served over a smoky tomatillo sauce, topped with freshly grated mozzarella cheese. I have to admit it was hard to save a few bites for our other Nightwire staff, who were off busy taking photographs while we were eating. Ahhh, the benefits of seniority! When I said ahhhh, I should have said Ahi, as in Ahi Tuna (\$12) Sashimi style tuna, seared rare and served with wasabi aioli and ponzo sauce. This was one of my favorites and not a bite made it to the photographers!

The food was flowing as the drinks were being refilled and passed around. We were served Lobster Macaroni & Cheese (\$15) Maine lobster lightly simmered in a four cheese sauce served over fusilli pasta. Definitely more along the lines of a dinner dish rather than a tapas dish because there is plenty to share for sure. Villa has a nice selection of seafood selections Gamberi Alla Prosciutto (\$11) grilled prosciutto wrapped shrimp accompanied with roasted red peppers and a fig molasses sauce. I swear I used my finger to swipe up that sauce. Villa also offers Fire Cracker Shrimp (\$10) a spicy coconut shrimp served with a tequila orange dipping sauce. If

Where Is Villa

Villa is open Wednesday, Thursday & Friday at 5pm till 2am. Saturday’s open at 7pm and Sundays Villa opens at 2pm with tapas for a late brunch. Check them out at www.villasouthside.com, find them on Facebook or follow them on Twitter!



shrimp is not your taste- you can try the South Side Sliders (\$11) premium Kobe beef served on a warm pretzel roll. This seems like the perfect late night bite and I'm glad to know that the kitchen at Villa is open late. They serve food till 11pm. The last tapas we tried was the Chicken Skewers (\$8) tender chunks of chicken grilled to perfection with veggies served blackened or barbeque style. Joyce couldn't figure out how they grilled the chicken to perfection, moist and juicy, seared on the outside without serving burnt vegetables but this simple tapas seemed to be her favorite. Simple and savory always gets her vote. The villa menu offers vegetarian choices of Risotto Fritters, Fresh Cut Fries, Sweet Potato Fries and Vegetable Spring Rolls. We're pretty certain that there's something for every taste and it's so much fun to order a few things and share. I love ordering a bunch of things and at Villa the cost is very fair considering the quality and presentation. How exciting that this is in my neighborhood. I think I'll be a

regular! I often find myself tired and hungry after a long work day not wanting to eat fast food- never - but wanting to patronize my local establishments who all seem to close around 9 or 10.

Villa has raised the bar on the South Side nightlife scene. They feature the best DJ's in the city, an outside patio, VIP accommodations, dancing and great food! There's no age limit too cool, so stop by have a martini and grab a bite to eat. This is a fabulous people watching hot spot that provides a stimulating atmosphere in one of the city's most vibrant neighborhoods.

See you on the dance floor! And as always be sure and tell your friends from Nightwire sent you!

