

## A Room With iViu

<http://www.newportbeachindy.com/2012/04/10/room-iviui/>

April 11, 2012

“I view food,” I stated to Catherine, my editorial assistant.

“I think you mean I see food,” she corrected.

“Well, normally, yes. But in this case, it’s iViu food. You know that new location-based app called iViu we tried out at Hi-Time Wine Cellar recently?”

“Of course. Even though it’s still in development, I thought it was fabulous. You walk around the store and receive personalized info and recommendations on your cell phone depending on which part of Hi-Time you’re in.”

“Exactly. Now, Great Maple restaurant in Fashion Island is using the app to deliver special menu offerings to shoppers in the mall.”

“I’m not familiar with Great Maple.”

“They’ve only been around since last fall, but after sampling a few menu items soon after they opened, I was impressed with their concept and the food. And since they’re the only restaurant in OC using iViu, I think we need to go iViu the food.”

“And maybe sample some dishes?”

“Well, they do have an amazing happy hour, so ... we’ll see.”

On the way to Fashion Island, I told Catherine that Great Maple replaced another restaurant called Rustica. In less than a week, the owners had transformed the former wine bar and restaurant into a seasonally inspired bistro featuring sustainable produce, responsibly caught seafood and farm-fresh meats.

The chef is Laurent Ferre, whose former restaurant, Pleasant Peasant, was a longtime fixture in Newport Beach. Ferre has blended his passion for French cuisine with traditional American comfort foods, resulting in a menu that’s guaranteed to please almost any palate.

When we arrived we were greeted by GM Romuald Crist, who ushered us on to the patio, where several iViu representatives were finishing a lunch meeting.

“Perfect timing,” I told them. “We’re here to learn how Great Maple is using iViu.”

We discovered that, as with Hi-Time, Great Maple is still testing the various ways they can use iViu. In addition to sending special offers to shoppers and letting them view the complete menu without having to go to the restaurant’s website, the app can also let Great Maple know where a patron is in the restaurant, and can send someone sitting at the bar an offer for an entrée. In the future, users will also be able to watch short videos of bartenders creating cocktails, or the chef preparing an entrée in the kitchen.

We also found out that Great Maple is adding new spring dishes to its seasonal menu the week after Easter, and would be using the iViu app to offer new menu items to shoppers. We decided to return after Easter to sample the new dishes and get a full iViu experience.

“You’ve got some great dishes listed here,” I said as I perused the current menu. “I can’t imagine what you’d remove to make way for new dishes,”

“Some of the heavier winter items will come off, and we’ll add seasonal vegetables and other items,” explained Chef Ferre. “But we have some dishes that will probably always be on the menu.”

“What would you say are the signature dishes, the ones that diners keep ordering,” I asked.

“Are you hungry? I will bring you some of the most popular ones.”

“Chef, I never say no to great food at Great Maple,” I replied, smiling.

Within minutes, a variety of appetizers and entrees appeared: Baguette Grilled Cheese with Salted Rosemary and Clover Honey, Portabello Mushroom Fries with Aioli Mayo, and a Moroccan Lamb Burger with Cheese and a side of Truffle Fries.

After trying all three dishes, Catherine and I knew why they were so popular.

“These mushroom fries are fantastic,” I enthused between bites.

“They really come to life when dipped in the aioli mayo,” added Catherine. “I’d tell my friends not to be afraid to try these if they aren’t a fan of mushrooms, because if you hadn’t told me, I would never guess they were mushrooms.”

“And this baguette with the grilled brie is unlike anything I’ve had, and the sweet onions are a nice touch to offset the other flavors,” I said, trying not to talk with my mouth full.

“The combination of flavors are amazing, especially the honey with the brie,” agreed Catherine.

I’m not a big burger fan, but after one bite of the lamb burger, I changed my mind.

“Wow—this is sensational,” I exclaimed. “The brie with the lamb is a perfect pairing, but I also love the charred bun.”

“It doesn’t even need any condiments, just the burger and cheese, plus tomato and lettuce, is enough,” stated Catherine.

“I also noticed you can’t stop eating those truffle fries,” I teased.

Dessert suddenly appeared: a fresh Apple Pie with ice cream unlike anything I’ve had.

“It looks like a soufflé, but it’s packed with good-sized slices of apple with just a touch of cinnamon,” said Catherine as she dug into the dish.

“Chef, I agree—these dishes can never come off the menu,” I told him

“Wait until you see what we are adding next week.”

“We’ll be back to iViu your menu...and taste it, too.”

For more info on Great Maple, visit [www.GreatMapleFashionIsland.com](http://www.GreatMapleFashionIsland.com). The iViu app is available to download in both the iPhone and Android



The Baguette Grilled Cheese.

