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## Porto Vivo in Huntington

Posted on Monday, 31st August, 2009 by [Mark Levine](#)



[Porto Vivo](#)

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It's not often that we get to visit a restaurant the very week that it opens. A highly visible establishment in our very small community of food writers on Long Island, [Porto Vivo](#) is stretching its wings during this first week of flight. Our visit on Saturday night was filled with many surprises and we think that we may have just awarded our "Newcomer of the Year" award to this young restaurant.

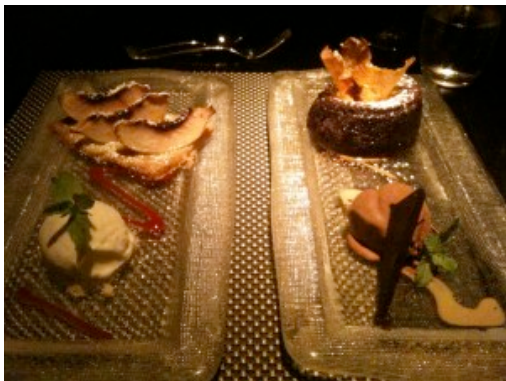
Porto Vivo is not your usual restaurant. Housed in an old antiques shop on Gerard Street, the space is unlike that of most of Long Island. There are 4 levels to this restaurant/lounge with an impressive entryway setting the stage. With the four levels come four distinct atmospheres and experiences. The lowest floor houses the wine cellar. In the future, we could see private wine dinners and tastings being held in the temperature controlled room. Speaking with the owner, the wine list will be growing significantly in the near future and this will be a shining point in the restaurant's offerings. Moving up vertically from there is the main dining room. The ground floor dining room has the most activity and is quite noisy, but intimate enough for a date. Just above this level about a half a floor up is the lounge/bar area. Flanked by flatscreens on the wall, the action lies here while you wait for your table or stay late at night after the kitchen closes and into the last call. The bar is circular and you'll be able to enjoy the fine sights of the well-heeled customers who are hunkered down and enjoying their time at the bar. The very top floor is broken down into two separate areas (one with a fireplace) and could easily house a private party or two. Serena Williams had the top area the night before we dined here, fresh off her first pitch at the Yankees game.

The decor is straight out of Manhattan and not what you would typically see on Long Island. The attention to detail was visible in everything from the carefully chosen cutlery to the exposed brick and leather covering on the walls. The trendy atmosphere was highlighted with low lights, chocolate brown accents and mellow lighting. We had a corner table on the ground floor so we had the perfect vantage point to check out who was coming to the restaurant.



You might expect some hiccups on an opening week (or month) but the service was as smooth as a seasoned veteran. The waiters were extremely attentive to our every need and helpful with our dining choices when we asked for recommendations. An [italian menu](#) flush with seafood and pasta dishes, the quality and presentation of the food was excellent. We started off our meal with a Grilled Squid Salad as well as their House Salad. Large chunks of squid were grilled to perfection and sitting neatly within a salad of its own. The house salad with its citrus dressing, sliced pear and blue cheese topping was refreshing and engaged our palates for the next dishes. For our entrees we split it down the middle with one of us getting a seafood dish and the other a veal milanese. For the seafood we ordered the salmon, which was slow roasted and served with fennel puree and topped with salmon caviar and salmon

skin. The wonderful texture of the moist salmon combined with the pop of the salmon caviar created a wonderful sensation in your mouth. This was our favorite dish. The veal too was superb with its fried crust (but not too fried or oily). Since all of the dishes are served a la carte, our side was Porto Vivo fries, drizzled with truffle oil and served in a cone.



A dinner wouldn't be complete without a sampling of the dessert selections. Stuffed as we were, we somehow found the strength to engage the sweet tooth inside of us. The peach tart and the molten chocolate cake were calling our names. The molten cake is usually served a bit hotter than I received mine, but I enjoyed that luke warmness better. It's a personal opinion though, as my wife wished it was a bit hotter. It was warm enough for the chocolate on the interior to ooze out of the outside shell and onto the plate. The espresso sauce boosted the flavor a bit and was eventually cut down by the chocolate ice cream served on the side.

Porto Vivo combines many aspects of a fine meal. The atmosphere is top notch while the cuisine shines just as bright. We eat at a lot of restaurants around these parts and it takes a lot for us to get excited about a restaurant. The complete experience that Porto Vivo will offer you is what will enable this newly formed hot spot to thrive in the coming months and years. We can highly recommend this newcomer to you and hope that you will find it every bit as intriguing and satisfying as we did.

*Pros: Decor, Service, Cuisine, Wine List*

*Cons: If I think of one, I'll let you know.*

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