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JUNIPER BISTRO

bites & bevies

The Juniper Bistro: A Banff Culinary Gem



Some restaurants win you over with the view before you've even taken a bite. Perched just far enough from town to feel tucked away, The Juniper Bistro's elevated location opens onto a 180° panorama of Mt. Rundle and the Bow Valley, a backdrop that makes it easy to settle into

the evening. Combined with complimentary parking, a peaceful setting away from the downtown bustle, and a strong connection to the surrounding landscape, the experience is distinctly Banff. This is truly one of Banff's most unique dining experiences.

The Juniper Team goes above and beyond to create genuine connections with every guest who visits. Their hospitality feels personal, adding an individual experience to the already perfect setting. My date and I were welcomed by Restaurant Manager Leonardo Homen, whose warmth and enthusiasm set a wonderful tone. It's clear that Leonardo is a fundamental part of creating the guest connection that complements the food and helps create the overall Juniper experience.

Executive Chef Sergio Garcia is the creative force behind the bistro's culinary identity, and his vision is rooted in a modern interpretation of New Canadian Cuisine, a style that blends regional ingredients, cultural influences, and storytelling on the plate. "We don't want to be safe," he told us. "We want to push the boundaries of what's possible while also partnering with local producers." And you can feel that philosophy in every dish.

The beverage program deserves its own spotlight for it revolves around partnerships with local breweries, distilleries, and producers, showcasing the best of Alberta's craft scene. Alcohol free options are plentiful, with creative cocktails, beers, and wines that leave options for every guest. The beer & wine list is almost exclusively Canadian, with a few international selections rounding out the experience.

This summer, the bistro has launched a brand new menu that highlights New Canadian Cuisine. It goes far beyond the typical protein rich approach, offering a thoughtful range of plant based and vegan dishes that make the menu accessible to diners of all backgrounds. It's inclusive, fresh, and unmistakably Canadian in its celebration of local flavours and seasonal ingredients.

We began with two standout starters: the Salmon Tartare and the Wild Blueberry Baked Brie. The tartare is delicate and beautifully balanced, but what makes it truly special is the approach to the fish itself. Instead of relying solely on the usual cuts, the most overlooked (and often most flavourful) parts of the salmon are used - the cheeks and the tender sections between the bones. These pieces are prized

for their richness and texture. This is a dish that feels both familiar and original, a perfect example of New Canadian Cuisine in action.

The Baked Brie arrived warm and bubbling, paired with chipotle peaches and slices of Wild Flour Artisan Bakery sourdough bread. It's rich and the perfect complement to one of the bistro's seasonal cocktails, many of which feature ingredients sourced from the region.

For our main, we were served the Smoked Bison Short Rib paired with a side of Honey Glazed Carrots, two dishes that feel like they belong in Alberta. Braised for twelve hours, lacquered with a wild blueberry glaze, and finished with a peppercorn blend, the meat is tender, smoky, and flavourful. The most charming detail is the rosemary paintbrush that accompanies the dish. With it, diners can "brush" on the Juniper-made BBQ sauce to their liking. Chef Sergio's mother is a painter and this is a tribute to her, one that highlights the artistic spirit behind New Canadian Cuisine.

We ended the evening with the Rhubarb & Pistachio Mousse, a layered dessert that manages to be both unique and refined. Rhubarb mousse, pistachio cake, rhubarb compote, and dark-chocolate quinoa crumble come together in a dairy-free dessert that truly feels like summer. The best part? The Juniper incorporates ingredients grown on site specifically for the restaurant, including rhubarb and seasonal herbs, so this dessert is literally from Banff!



What makes The Juniper Bistro special isn't just the food... though the food is exceptional. It's the intent behind it. The hospitality is second to none, every dish has a story, every ingredient has a purpose, and every plate reflects the belief that New Canadian Cuisine should be rooted in the place it comes from.

If you're in Banff and you're after a dining experience that feels thoughtful and creative, The Juniper Bistro cannot be missed.

Jasper Johnson began his career navigating the intensity of five-diamond dining rooms before moving into the Bow Valley food scene. After two decades in Canmore, he has witnessed the Bow Valley's restaurant landscape transform, and he's tasted his way through it! Often found at the Valley's happiest hours - purely for research - he writes restaurant reviews that balance honesty, humour, and a deep respect for the craft.

He can otherwise be found in the mountains, enjoying a good tailgate BBQ after a day at the hill.



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