

RESTAURANT REVIEW: HIFALUTIN RAPID FIRE WESTERN GRILL

HiFalutin still doing casual dining right

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Do this job for a while and you become like a seasoned baseball scout. It doesn't take long to pick out the kid who can fire a pitch like a missile – or the one who can't.

That's what I felt like at HiFalutin Rapid Fire Western Grill the other night. One bite of the rib-eye and my mind was made up. I was ready to go home.

In fairness, my companions' pot roast and meatloaf also assisted in the formation of a quick opinion. Though very different from my steak, these dishes didn't require much contemplation.

All were first-rate.

If Tucson's handful of Western-themed restaurants were like baseball teams, HiFalutin would be a consistent pennant winner. Factor in its comfortable dining room and polished service, and we're talking about a World Series contender.

This shouldn't come as a surprise. HiFalutin opened 4 1/2 years ago to rave reviews and its owners obviously know that consistency is not only the key to surviving,

but thriving.

"Comfort food with a Western flair" was how I described it back in September 2002. "The prices are reasonable, the food is tasty and the service couldn't be friendlier."

The description still fits. HiFalutin is the kind of casual restaurant where you'll want to wash your steak down with an ice-cold beer not a glass of pricey wine. And while the prices for its meat-heavy menu have gone up over the years (entrees top out at \$24.99 today, or about \$10 more than in 2002), the sense of value is still here.

A big part of HiFalutin's appeal is its laid back down-on-the-ranch personality. The staff is outfitted in denim and Stetsons, the dining room is a Martha Stewart version of a bunkhouse, and entrees have such goofy names as Tombstone Baked Chicken Tortellini and Dawg Gone Great Flank Steak. It all would be easy to dismiss as tired cowboy kitsch, but it seems to work.

None of this would matter, of course, if the food wasn't a cut above. That it is became evident with our "Stampede Sampler" appetizer (\$15.95), a sampling of glazed baby back pork ribs, shrimp and skewers of beef and chicken. The ribs came out on top,

thanks to moist meat that fell off the bone with little effort.

My Flat Iron 14-ounce Rib-Eye (\$22.99) was a thing of beauty, HiFalutin's equivalent of a 100-mph fastball. Thick, tender and juicy, it comes with a crumbled bleu cheese sauce, shaved onion rings, basil mashed potatoes and crisp string beans.

Just as good was the Cattleboss Pot Roast (\$13.99) and Ranch House Meatloaf (\$12.99). Rare is the restaurant with pot roast on the menu, so HiFalutin deserves points just for being bold. And the meatloaf was a textbook example of how meatloaf should be done.

The only disappointment was Aunt Chuck's Favorite (\$8.25), a salad of "fresh greens," walnuts, green apples and bleu cheese with a raspberry vinaigrette. The taste was fine, but

the iceberg lettuce hardly qualifies as a green in my book.

Still, one strike over the course of a meal didn't detract from all the home runs.

HiFalutin's casual atmosphere may encourage you to get a beer with your Flat Iron 14 oz. Rib-Eye.

NORMA JEAN GARGASZ
Tucson Citizen



HiFalutin
Rapid Fire Western Grill

Starters

Stampede Sampler
A sampling of our favorites, featuring 4 ribs,
3 shrimp, and 4 skewers
\$15.95

Old Pueblo
Bacon Wrapped Shrimp
\$9.25

Skewers
Your choice of Chicken & Flank Steak, or
Grilled Cashew Crustard with roasted cashew sauce
\$8.25

Blue Cheese Chips
\$6.50

Hacienda Cheese Crisp
A flaky crust topped with cheese, green chili
& our cowboy salsa
\$7.25

Try it with our seasoned chicken
or pulled beef
\$8.25

Soups

HF Clam Chowder
(Positively the Best!)
\$6.75

Salt River Canyon Chicken Soup
\$6.75

AT A GLANCE

HiFalutin Rapid Fire Western Grill

6780 N. Oracle Road, 297-0518

Hours: 11 a.m.-9 p.m. daily

Price: Appetizers, soups and salads \$4.99-\$10.99,
entrees \$13.99-\$24.99

Bar: Full

Meat options: Glazed baby back pork ribs (full rack,
\$18.99), prime rib (\$19.99), and filet (\$24.99).

Seafood options: Pesto shrimp linguini (\$15.99),
salmon rubbed with pesto (\$16.99) and shrimp
scampi (\$16.99)

Vegetarian options: Grilled vegetables and
noodles (\$11.99)

Dessert options: Chocolate cake (\$5.50),
caramel apple cobbler (\$5.50) and cheese-
cake (\$5.95)

Currency: Cash and credit

Last health inspection: An "excellent" rat-
ing March 28, as well as Oct. 31. A "good"
rating was awarded in six previous inspections.

