

# Vince's North Port Restaurant earns 5-stars

## BY THE STARVING REPORTER

Let me ask you something. Have you ever searched for that special restaurant where you get great food, great service and are surrounded by great people? Well search no further, because I have that restaurant, and it was right under my nose the entire time.

After much debate my husband and I headed out for dinner around 8:00 pm Tuesday night. As usual, neither one of us could make a choice about where we wanted to eat. I am sure that you can relate, you make decisions all day, and then you get home and you are faced with more decisions. I suppose that is what life is all about. Some how I don't remember life being this complicated, until I became an adult. As a result we had no real plan except to drive, until we found something that appealed to us. While I drove north we tossed over some ideas, many of which were shot down, by one or the other of us. That's when we agreed upon the Relay Station located in Vivian (they have the best ranch French fries), but by the time we reached North Market, we had decided we were really hungry, and couldn't make it the additional 20 miles (not that either of us would wither away) that's when the lights of Vince's North Port Restaurant caught our attention. We both gave each other a quick glance and I flipped an illegal U turn and headed back towards the restaurant.

Once we entered the restaurant we were greeted by a nice older man, who said as you can see we are very busy, so choose your seat. Which was meant as a joke, because it was close to closing time, and the only people there were what I gathered to be regulars. In any case we chose our seating arrangements and made ourselves comfortable. The best way to describe this eatery is rustic, with an aquatic flare. There is a very vibrant mural painted on the wall, that is eye catching. There is also a large upright freezer with a very large beer mug painted on the front of it, and the words "warning this box contains the coldest beer mugs in town, try one today." It really gave the place flare, or course so did the regular patrons seated at the bar.

Once seated, we were meet with a smile by Nicole who said she would be our waitress as she passed out the menus and asked what we would like to drink. Before we knew it Nicole was back in a flash with our drinks. She

then disappeared for a short while, so that we could peruse the menu. Vince's offers a wide variety of appetizers, and with so many fantastic choices my husband decided on a dozen of oysters on the half shell. The price was extremely affordable at \$6.95 for the dozen. The oysters were delivered as soon as they were freshly shucked at the bar. They were large, and according to my husband they tasted fantastic, and grit free. Apparently, you can occasionally get raw oysters that have a lot of sand like grit in them, but these he assured me were perfect. I personally wouldn't know, because I refrain from eating raw items that appear close to the consistency of nasal fluids!

The menu offers many entrées ranging from broiled shrimp, to a chicken sandwich. Based on the menu prices this restaurant would be extremely affordable for a family outing. It was difficult to make a choice, everything looked so appealing but ultimately I decided on the daily special which was Steak and Shrimp for \$17.95, my husband having not met his oyster fill, decided on the make your own combo, chose Fried Oysters and Shrimp. We both opted for the stuffed baked potato.

While we waited for our entrees to arrive and my dear hubby continued to suck down his oysters on the half shell, I continued to check out our surroundings. The restaurant seemed warm and inviting, especially with the people located at the bar.

One guy arrived late, close to closing time cracking jokes with the bartender like they were old friends, even talking to my husband and myself, and we were complete strangers. I can understand his enthusiasm; he was ecstatic that his son would be coming home in just a few short days from Iraq. Apparently, he has been there serving our country and protecting the freedoms that we hold dear. I didn't ask his son's name, but I want to tell him and all of the other people in uniform thank you for choosing to wear the uniform that protects us all, we appreciate you and your sacrifices to keep us safe. It was based on our interactions that I got the real sense that Vince's must be their place to hang out, have a beer and spend time with friends, sort of the "Cheers" of North Shreveport.

On the menu, Vince has printed his story, sharing with patrons a little about the busi-

ness and how they got to where they are today. The story tells of his appreciation for his hard working staff, which put forth their best efforts every day to make his restaurant special. I find this very enduring. I personally believe that every associate should realize the importance of the customer, just like every owner/manager should acknowledge that their success, depends on their associates, and Vince clearly has that concept grasped.

Our entrees arrived in a very timely fashion, cooked to perfection. I like my steak well done. Some people would say that it ruins the flavor of the meat. I wouldn't agree with that statement, I know that I can't have anything on my plate dripping or oozing. lcky! And because of the way I like my meat cooked, I often run into issues, but not this time. My steak was cooked to my expectation and still had plenty of flavor, and natural juices. I am not sure what they use for batter on the shrimp, but whatever they use it is FANTASTIC! The shrimp were scrumptious, and each bite was savored. The fried oysters exceeded the expectation yet again, and the stuffed potato was filled with ample cheese, green onions and bacon.

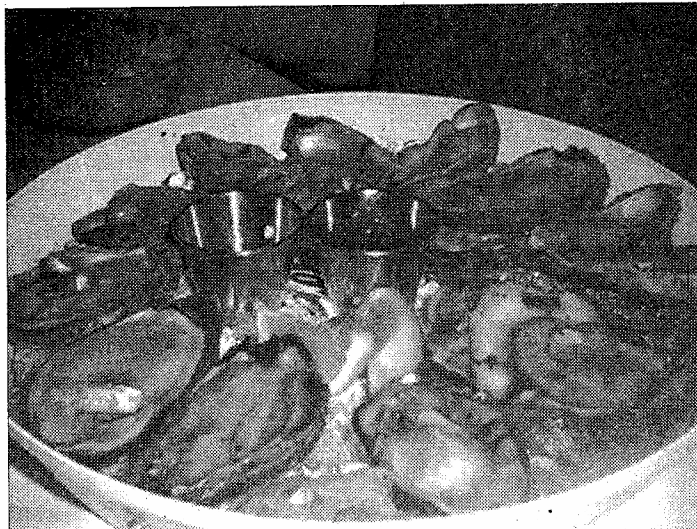
Even though we are on a variation of the Atkins plan, we sacrificed this evening, because the food was too good to pass up.

The customer service delivered by Nicole was superb and the comfortable, warm, family like atmosphere earns Vince's \*\*\*\*\* for customer service. The restaurant clean and fresh smelled. I did manage to take a quick trip to the ladies room and found it to be extremely clean, complete with teal blue ceramic tile to reflect the aquatic theme of the restaurant. I especially liked the picture of the antebellum home, so they also earn \*\*\*\*\* for restroom cleanliness. The food was some of the best that I have had. The steak, shrimp and oysters exceeded our expectation; each bite was to be savored. The salads though simple were fresh and packed with flavor. Vince's kitchen team also earns \*\*\*\*\* for preparation and presentation.

Vince's is open M-Th 11am-9pm, F-S 11am-10pm, and closed on Sunday. They also offer an enticing weekday lunch special with down home southern style cooking for \$5.95 during the week. I had a chance to look over the menu and let me tell you. I had gained 5 pounds just



**The Steak & Shrimp Special at Vince's North Port Restaurant was outstanding, accompanied by a delicious stuffed baked potato.**



**You can't get oysters on the half shell this big everywhere in town, but you can at Vince's North Port Restaurant.**

reading it! They also offer some tantalizing desserts. Unfortunately, I wanted bread pudding and they didn't have any left, due to the late hour, but if the desserts tasted anything like the main course, you won't be disappointed.

I have driven by this restaurant for years, never stopping. I feel like I have suffered from that choice, missing out on the great food and incredible atmosphere. So if there is anyone else out there who has missed this local gold mine, end your suffering today and go to Vince's North Port Restaurant on North Market and collect your treasure! This may have been my first visit to Vince's but it will not be my last!

**This eatery is clearly focused on delivering great food and outstanding service and to help en-**

sure that they are on the right path, they offer comment cards on each table soliciting feedback from their customers. They proudly tell you that they are not perfect and sometimes make mistakes, but if you make them aware they will do their best to make it right. This is the key to effective service recovery, it is only when you have been made aware of an error that you can move forward and correct it. I am happy to say that during our visit we did not experience any problems, in fact we were extremely pleased with all levels of service which earned Vince's North Port Restaurant an overall rating of \*\*\*\*\* (5-Stars).

On behalf of Vince and in his own words "Sit back relax and enjoy some great Louisiana food and southern hospitality."