

## DINING:

## Kinkead in Annapolis

by Scott Haring



The dining room of Hell Point Seafood in Annapolis is on the second floor, with a commanding view of water, boats and dockside strollers.

The Hell Point area of Annapolis' downtown City Dock has a new restaurant tenant -- Bob Kinkead has brought a more casual and reasonably priced version of his heavenly District establishment, Kinkead's, to Maryland's capital city.

Mr. Kinkead, an acclaimed chef and restaurateur, opened Hell Point Seafood for lunch and dinner in late June, teaming up with chefs Jeffrey Gaetjen and James Huff to offer seafood plates at this one-of-a-kind location at 12 Dock St.

The restaurant overlooks the scenic boat moorings of Ego Alley, City Dock and nearby Spa Creek.

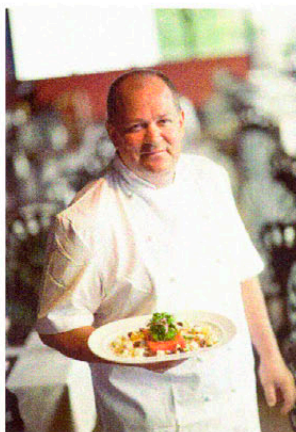
The site was home to Harbor House for years, then for a short stint the Italian restaurant Vespucci's, and, more re-

cently, a Phillips Seafood restaurant.

A second-floor dining room offers beautiful views of dock walkers and boat traffic. The bottom and top floors both have bars and the second floor also has a room for private parties.

The menu features lots of fresh ingredients and bold flavors, such as a refreshing salad of avocado, romaine, chili cabbage slaw and buttermilk-cilantro dressing with lime.

Seafood starters include Thai fried squid (\$10) with green papaya salad and lime-chili dipping sauce. The lightly breaded squid is perfectly tender and not one bit chewy, and the papaya makes a nice contrast in texture and flavor, while the dipping sauce gives a perfect burst of heat, easily controlled to personal taste.



Jeffrey Gaetjen, chef and co-owner at Hell Point Seafood in Annapolis, shows off a watermelon salad.

Hawaiian-style raw tuna "poke" (\$12) with sushi rice, hearts of palm, toasted sesame seeds and taro chips, offers the wonderful flavors of sushi in a less-constructed manner. The rice was perfect and was topped with small dice of tuna. The freshness of the tuna was apparent. Slices of hearts of palm provided a contrasting crunch, and it was all brought together nicely with a subtle teriyaki sauce that accented rather than covered up.

The soft-shell crabs, a quintessential Maryland dish, pairs two local favorites: corn and crabs. Two soft-shell crabs (\$22) were crusted with masa and fried to be perfectly crisp yet still juicy in the center. The crabs were not overly large but were very meaty and were paired with a scallion spoon bread, smoked bacon, local corn puree and fava-bean succotash. The sweet taste of corn united all the elements of the

dish. The bacon on the side provided a nice, smoky contrast to the sweetness of the corn but didn't overpower as it could have had it been mixed in with the dishes. The corn and fava beans in the succotash were crisp-tender and bursting with flavor. The spoon bread and puree offered very subtle flavors but provided nice texture variations.

Crispy blackback flounder (\$24) was prepared with morsels of ham, artichokes, shrimp, crab meat, new potatoes and lemon-herb butter. The flounder was perfectly flaky, the filet a bit thicker than usual and served piping hot. The Tasso ham left a strong impression on the dish, but the artichokes and shrimp were hearty enough to stand up to it. The crab meat and butter added a nice richness.

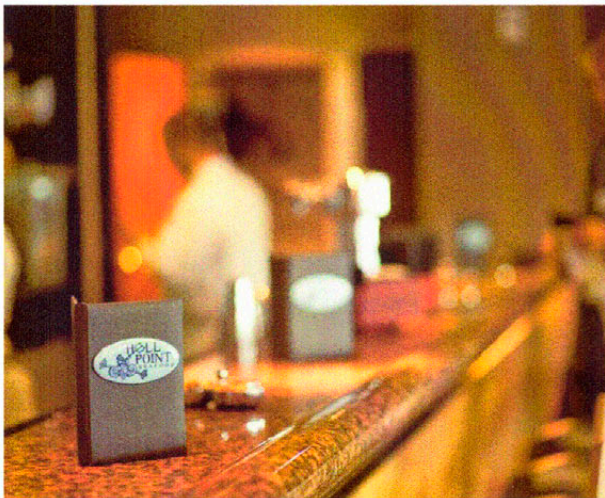
Herb-crusted roasted rockfish (\$23) was served with porcini broth, wild-mushroom agnolotti and garlic spinach. The porcini broth offered a rich, earthy flavor that was a nice accent to this hearty white fish. The spinach also offered a lot of flavor - and balance to the subtle, tender stuffed pasta.

A grilled filet mignon (\$24) apparently is very popular with diners not ordering a seafood plate. Served with wild mushrooms, creamy mashed potatoes and local green beans, the dish recently was unavailable shortly after 6 p.m.

Most of the desserts are made in-house, with ice cream accents and options from Aromi d'Italia next door.

The nectarine tart tatin (\$9) was bursting with nectarine flavor. It was not oversweetened, so the natural flavors were able to shine through. Pistachio ice cream offered a nice contrast.

Warm black cherry crisp (\$8) featured luscious fresh cherries and a perfectly sweet oatmeal crisp topping. The intense flavor of the cherries left one sometimes hoping for a little more of the crunchy topping. The cherry vanilla ice cream was good, but almost overkill.



Hell Point Seafood on City Dock in Annapolis has bars on two levels.

**RESTAURANT:**

Hell Point Seafood  
12 Dock St.  
Annapolis, 410/990-9888

**HOURS:**

Lunch 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
daily; dinner 5:30 to 10 p.m. daily

**PRICES:**

Soups and salads \$5 to \$10;  
appetizers \$9 to \$16; dinner  
entrees \$18 to \$39; desserts \$6  
to \$9

**PARKING:**

On-site

**ACCESS:**

Wheelchair accessible