

# Dining»

## WHERE WE'VE BEEN



### PELICAN LARRY'S RAW BAR & GRILL

New North Naples restaurant of Southwest Florida chain aims to please with food, drinks and fun.

Friday, Dec. 25



### 21 SPICES BY CHEF ASIF

New East Naples restaurant offers modern Indian cuisine for reasonable prices.

Friday, Jan. 8



### ORIGINAL PANCAKE HOUSE

The Dutch baby, apple pancake and bacon one-quarter inch thick await breakfast lovers in North Naples.

Friday, Jan. 1



## Did you miss it?



You can read the complete reviews online at [inthe239.com](http://inthe239.com).

# UMAMI, CULINARY INTUITION OFFSET OPENING GLITCHES AT ZEN

By **Chelle Koster Walton**

Daily News Correspondent; 239-263-4896

We are lucky we waited until the Sunday after New Year's, our server told us, because the lines the night before were out the door of the small, intimate dining room.

Zen Asian BBQ only had opened officially on Dec. 18, but already the word was out despite its rather hidden location in North Naples. That meant glitches and an untried Naples concept were being worked out under fire (or lack thereof, which I will explain).

Regardless, the comments and glowing looks of appreciation on guests' faces that Sunday night demonstrated that the truly original décor and food palette here would survive opening jitters.

The menu, inspired by Iron Chef Morimoto-trained Chef Koko, gently folds together two cultures, but without sacrificing Asian authenticity. For instance, the list of shareable appetizers lists tuna pizza (\$11.95) and Korean wings (\$8.95) — Asian dishes that borrow the names of American favorites.

We tried — under the Rice + Noodle + Soup heading — Bulgogi Ramen Nacho (\$11.95), but only because the kitchen had run out of Chef Koko's signature Hokkaido Ramen (\$14.95), a seafood and noodle dish swimming in "famous 17 hours broth."

The ramen nacho managed to assuage our disappointment at missing a much-anticipated dish. It reasserts ramen's recent promotion from college prepackaged hangover cure to trend food.

A loose interpretation of "nacho," it serves a nest of crispy noodles topped with thin slices of beef rib-eye steak (did I detect a hint of hoisin sauce?), gooey Parmesan and Sriracha aioli.

See ZEN, 23F



DARRON R. SILVA/SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS (2)

Assistant manager Nutto Indrani demonstrates cooking Korean BBQ with boneless beef short ribs, shrimp and beef tongue at a table recently at Zen Asian BBQ restaurant in Naples. Diners can pick from several proteins and vegetables and cook them on a grill at the table.



A spicy tuna roll is served at Zen Asian BBQ.

[inthe239.com](http://inthe239.com)

- See more photos
- Read an extended review

REVIEWER RATING:  
**4 OUT OF 5**



## IF YOU GO: ZEN ASIAN BBQ

**Where:** 10823 U.S. 41 N., Naples  
**Hours:** 5 p.m. to midnight Sunday-Thursday, 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday-Saturday  
**Prices:** Appetizers to share \$5-\$14, sushi and rolls \$5-\$13, entrées \$12-\$26.  
**Contact:** [eatatzen.com](http://eatatzen.com), 239-260-7037

## THE DISH

from [inthe239.com](http://inthe239.com)



**NAPLES WINTER WINE FESTIVAL**  
Pastries are **Emily Luchetti's** specialty. The San Francisco chef has a sweet tooth and eye for creating some of the countries most celebrated desserts. Her resume includes stops as executive pastry chef at San Francisco's Farallon from 1997 to 2014 and Waterbar from 2008 to 2014. She's now with Big Night Restaurant Group (The Cavalier, Marlowe, Park Tavern). Her pastry style is simple and elegant, she says on her website. Some of her favorite creations include Chocolate-Peanut Butter Terrine with Sugared Peanuts and Oat Crisps with Blueberries and Creme Fraiche.

For past few months in this spot, we have provided information on the chefs selected for the Naples Winter Wine Festival, Jan. 29-31.

## GOING GRAPE

Wine columnist Julie Glenn offered her take on this weekend's NFL playoffs. What wines pair well with the final four teams left standing: the New England Patriots, Denver Broncos, Arizona Cardinals and Carolina Panthers? Read Glenn's wine choices for each team at [naplesnews.com](http://naplesnews.com).