



SILVER STAR STEAK COMPANY

A Cut Above

© Courtesy Silver Star Steak Company

“As diverse as the food it serves, the Silver Star offers an atmosphere perfect for business lunches, family dining, or formal occasions.”



I have two confessions to make: The first—I am not a food critic by trade. I am, however, a foodie who loves to write and happens to live in a town that feeds my senses as well as my stomach. Helena is not only

a great place to live if you have an interest in art, politics, or charming brick Victorians, but it also offers plenty of opportunities to experience quality food from garden to plate. Whether you’re interested in growing your own vegetables in a community garden, shopping at an organic market, or eating out at a Thai restaurant or cozy bistro, the Queen City has it. (OK; we’re not Seattle, but there’s nothing like a Montana day in July when the sun is shining in full force, right?)

Second confession: I love the Silver Star. When Hayley asked me to write this article for *Signature Montana*, I promised I’d give an objective account of my most recent dining experience there last month. Now that I’ve fully disclosed my affections and affinities, here goes:

The Silver Star Steak Company, which just celebrated its seventh anniversary, is located in Helena’s new Great Northern Town Center. The Silver Star prides itself on

outstanding steak and seafood, served in a warm, rich interior somewhat similar to its sister establishments, the Bay Bar and Grille in Bozeman and North Bay Grille in Kalispell. Located adjacent to the Great Northern Hotel, the Silver Star is a favorite with tourists and locals alike.

I choose a busy Friday evening for this visit, and am greeted warmly by General Manager Jeff Hiel. A Chicago transplant, Jeff has lived in Helena for thirteen years and has played an integral role in the opening and continued success of the Silver Star. Jeff is eager to show me the restaurant’s Wine Room, home to Helena’s most extensive wine list. “We have nearly 700 bottles and we’re constantly adding labels,” Jeff says. He points out their most expensive vintage, a Penfolds Grange South Australian Shiraz priced at \$425 for the bottle.

As I’m fairly certain I can’t expense that to *Signature Montana*, I choose a much more economical, but nicely fruited glass of Riesling to accompany the baked brie appetizer that arrives. Served on a pool of huckleberry and port reduction sauce, it’s a creamy contrast to the crunchy lavash flatbread that accompanies it.

While the Silver Star offers a variety of different cuts of steaks and portion options, I select a grilled herb-encrusted walleye for my entrée. Served with roasted corn and wild rice salsa, it’s a delicate interworking of flavors, which makes

The Silver Star’s lounge atmosphere is warm and friendly and you can expect to find your most favorite libation here.

The pleasant atmosphere is perfect for relaxed family dining, casual business lunches, or formal occasions.



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"If you ask for something special because of dietary preferences or food allergies, even if it's not on the menu, we can accommodate. If you sit down, we'll feed you."

me wonder how a steakhouse can serve such good seafood. Much of the credit goes to Chef Ben Osband, who trained at the Western Culinary Institute in Portland. Ben tells me he spent a lot of time cooking seafood dishes on the Portland restaurant scene before joining the Silver Star three years ago. Outgoing and immediately likeable, he blends culinary skill with a genuine concern for what pleases people and their palates. "We're here to please, whether our customers want a steak or a hoagie," Ben says. "If you ask for something special because of dietary preferences or food allergies, even if it's not on the menu, we can accommodate. If you sit down, we'll feed you," he says, laughing.

As diverse as the food it serves, the Silver Star offers an atmosphere perfect for business lunches, family dining, or formal occasions. If you're in the mood for a martini while you're waiting for a table to open up, the restaurant's lounge can accommodate nearly any drink request (try their pomegranate martini; it's like a little bit of sunshine in a glass at the end of a February day when the sun was not shining in full force). For those who choose instead to visit the Silver Star's small casino, free cocktails are offered while you play, and full-menu service is available from 2:00 pm to close.

Judging by the crowds in the lounge and the main dining room, the recent economic slowdown hasn't affected the Silver Star. "Business is still very good, but we want to stay in tune with the economy," Ben says. "We'll be revamping our menu a bit to make our portions and prices more reflective of our customers' needs." A major website revamp is in the works also, in order to better showcase the restaurant's menu and services.

Before heading back to the kitchen, Ben suggests I try something from the Silver Star's dessert menu, which offers a nice combination of sweets made both in-house and at Helena's Park Avenue Bakery. I chose the "berrymisu," a summery twist on the traditional tiramisu. It is every bit as delicious as it sounds, and ends the meal on a decadent note.

The next time you're in Helena, carve out some time for the Silver Star Steak Company. You'll experience consistently great food and quality service in a uniquely elegant steakhouse. It truly is a cut above. **M**



Courtesy Silver Star Steak Company

Lunch guests enjoy the Silver Star's patio during the summer months, a great way to soak up some rays and the atmosphere of Helena's Great Northern Town Center.

Coming up: The Silver Star's Wine Dinner in March. This popular event, which is limited to 30, offers guests a 5 – 7 course seasonal dinner paired with wines from a featured vineyard.

If you go: The Silver Star Steak Company is located at 833 Great Northern Boulevard in Helena; phone is (406) 495-0677. Reservations are recommended; walk-ins are welcome. It is a non-smoking establishment, and handicapped accessible. The restaurant opens at 11 a.m. Monday – Saturday and at 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. Outdoor patio seating is available during Montana's warmer months. Take-out and catering available; call to reserve the Banquet Room or Cigar Room.

Vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free selections are available by request, as is a children's menu.

www.silverstarsteakco.com



~Anastasia Burton was raised in northcentral Montana. She has worked in communications / public relations for 20 years. She lives in Helena.



Anastasia Burton



Courtesy Silver Star Steak Company



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ABOVE: Silver Star Chef Ben Osband prepares for the lunch crowd on a recent weekday morning.

BOTTOM LEFT: The restaurant's interiors greets guests with an imaginative use of slate and ceramic tiles, hinting at the dining room that awaits them.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Muted tones and metallic finishes are highlighted with dramatic flair throughout the Silver Star.