

## The Common Man

**88 Range Road, Windham; 603-898-0088; thecman.com**

**Cuisine:** Steaks, seafood, chicken, comfort food, Italian-American

**Hours:** Monday-Thursday, 4 to 9 p.m.; Friday, 4 to 9:30 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

**Pricing:** Appetizers, \$7.99-\$11.99; soups and salads, \$3.49-\$18.99; burgers and sandwiches, \$12.99-\$14.99; entrees, \$14.49-\$29.99.

## Common Man rocks dinner before the show

SQUEEZING IN DINNER before a concert is a risky prospect for this Our Gourmet and his Lovely Dining Companion, who spends so much time getting lovely for the big night out that we're usually rushing out the door with no time to spare. Lovely but late. Sorry, sweetie.

We were behind schedule the night we were racing to Windham to visit The Common Man before an 8 p.m. Peter Wolf show at Tupelo Music Hall in Derry.

We arrived in darkness as buckets of rain pummeled the parking lot, and there was not a space to be found.

I dropped LDC off at the door and circled the barn-style building a few times before stealing a spot behind a pickup truck whose driver had created a make-your-own space alongside a muddy ditch.

Inside, new arrivals were looking at an 80-minute wait for a table. Perhaps we were not the only ones who had chosen The C-Man for dinner before the show.

We can confirm at least one other dining couple watched the 75-year-old lead singer of the J. Geils Band swagger to the stage later that evening. We found them seated right next to us at the bar — where LDC had erased all points

lost from making us late by snagging two prime seats.

She even had a glass of Josh cabernet waiting for me. All was forgiven. Our bartender would take care of us.

We decided to start off by sampling a couple of appetizers, choosing the Rock Crab Cake (\$9.99) and the Tuna Poke

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Lettuce Wraps (\$11.99).

The crab cake was pan-seared and finished with a roasted pepper-onion salad and lemon basil aioli. This was LDC's choice, but I still got in a few bites of this delicious dish.

The three tuna lettuce wraps featured sweet soy and sriracha-dressed ahi tuna served over bibb lettuce with avocado cucumber salad, toasted sesame seeds and crispy wontons. As with the crab cake, the embellishments made this dish. If paired with another shared appetizer, this would have worked great as a light entree.

But we were on the O.G. detail, so we moved on to the entree menu.

I usually opt for a restaurant's signature dish or an unusual offering that isn't available elsewhere. From The Common Man's "Specialties" menu, I selected the Sweet Corn Bacon Ravioli (\$18.99).

The savory dish featured red peppers, onion and roasted corn tossed with red pepper cream and sweet corn bacon ravioli. It was topped with grilled blackened chicken, crispy bacon and scallions.

While the ravioli is the intended star of this entree, the blackened chicken was the perfect complement, a great blend of flavors.

My dining companion

## Scores for Common Man

**Atmosphere:** 18/20

**Menu:** 18/20

**Food:** 19/20

**Service:** 19/20

**Value:** 18/20

**Total:** 92/100



chose the Filet Mignon (\$29.99), also from the restaurant's Specialties menu. It was served with roasted asparagus and was available in three incarnations. LDC chose the version with Boursin ciabatta toast, topped with caramelized onions, and mashed potatoes as her side.

She ordered the filet medium rare, but it arrived too bloody to her liking so she asked our server to send it back. This was the evening's only snag. Don't send your food back to the kitchen on a super busy night. We had to wait a long while before that plate returned.

LDC then found it cooked closer to her liking but it was a bit chewy, which might have been due to that second trip to the grill. We'll give the chef a pass for that.

Overall, we had a great experience at this Common Man, which opened in 1997. It features a dining room with a fieldstone fireplace on the first floor and the cozy bar and grill area upstairs, where you have a view of the kitchen.

The Common Man restaurant group is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, having been in business almost as long as that singer for the J. Geils Band, who by the way, rocked a full house that night. The C-Man and the Woofa Goofa made for a great combination.



*The Union Leader has three teams of reviewers checking out restaurants around the state. They grade on a scale of 100 points in five categories.*



Filet Mignon at The Common Man.