

What's Old Is New And Fresh Again
The Old Place
 (agoura hills, ca)

BY MARIE F. BOWMAN



As the rustic exterior of “The Old Place” unfolds as you enter, so do 40 years’ worth of stories. This is how founders Tom and Barbara Runyan planned it, translating homespun fine dining into a no-frills feast for the senses, from its nonchalant “old west” furnishings to the smoky smell of meat cooked over a woodfire grill to the jovial tone set by animated conversations over Anchor Porter or a glass of wine procured next door at the adjacent Cornell Winery.

Though the experience may initially read as “your dad’s old school steakhouse,” there is a reason why the formula still works. In a restaurant climate defined by architectural Asian fare, trendy tapas, and dressed up pub grub, there is something reassuring about having a dining option where the menu has stayed virtually unchanged for four decades, save for a few updates implemented by Morgan Runyan when he took over two years ago, with something for everybody from fish to beef, all grilled to perfection over oak. The steamed clam appetizer is perfect in its simplicity, with morsels that melt in your mouth and are balanced with perfectly-textured home-baked bread. The same goes for their Caprese salad, composed of beautiful heirloom tomatoes, fresh basil, creamy mozzarella, garlic-crusted croutons, and a tangy, complex balsamic vinaigrette.

It’s the main courses, however, that make The Old Place a reliable standby. The Black Angus Sirloin is accessorized with an epic-sized baked potato packed with all the fixings, including generous chunks of smoked bacon that will make you

The Old Place
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 Agoura Hills, CA

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HOURS
 Thu-Sun 5p to 10p

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want to come back for breakfast. The same goes for a perfectly executed Oak Grilled Bone-in Rib Eye, a serious piece of meat big enough to share or enjoy over the course of two or more meals. The food comes on mismatched plates that have all been handpicked, which lends additional authenticity and charm. And since we’re rooted in the traditional, what better way to cap off a meal with a strawberry shortcake topped with homemade whip cream. My hat is off to the resident chef, “Oscar”; my palette thanks you for an amazing meal. Rest assured I will return soon.

Food doesn’t have to be complicated or elitist to be fancy, which probably explains why The Old Place is an old favorite among both young and established Hollywood, along with a variety of industry mover-and-shaker types. Even in a city that lives and breathes on the heels of the next big thing, Morgan Runyan and his family understand the value of a place that takes one back to a time when food was good and people were happy. ✎

