

na Brasa: beef, beef, beef, beef

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impressed at what they are doing here, especially at this price. You certainly get your money's worth."

According to John DeMers, editor and publisher of Texas Foodlover in Houston, Brazilian steakhouses like na Brasa "take a part of the world that most Americans don't know much about — the gaucho culture of Brazil and Argentina — and serve it up in a way that is both exotic and familiar at the same time." They have also succeeded in combining dining with entertainment, a marriage that is a lot easier to promise than to produce.

Owners Daniel DaCosta of Willow Grove and Celso Leite of Montgomeryville teamed with Rui Lucas of Philadelphia to create not only na Brasa but also the Iron Abbey Gastro Pub right next door, which has a European/English/Belgium décor. For na Brasa, the team tapped the talent of head chef Abilio Medeiros, who grew up in the south of Brazil where the serving style employed at na Brasa originated more than 500 years ago, according to Lucas. Medeiros has spent his career in the Brazilian steakhouse industry and opened ventures in Portugal and London before moving to the states.

Iron Abbey, with its castle-like feel and extensive fusion-style menu, is open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and boasts more than 200 bottled beers, ales, saisons, pilsners, porters and stouts, as well as barley wines and specialty drinks.

The gastro pub, a British term for a pub that specializes in high-quality food, is a "full-on" soccer bar with eight TV screens to simultaneously show live English, Scottish, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish matches, plus Philadelphia sports. When the place is crowded, it also has a thunderous din that would make an avalanche seem quiet. I did, however, overhear one woman say to a man she apparently just met, "I only wanted a small wedding, so we hired a three-foot-tall minister." (To make



Amanda Chinageia, a lovely young lady from Brazil, prepares a very reasonably priced \$6 Caipirinha, the national cocktail of Portugal, at tableside. (Photo by Len Lear)

a memorable impression, she should have said, "As part of Obama's stimulus package, corporate

executives are now only allowed to play miniature golf.")

The owners are planning to add outdoor dining by the end of the summer that would accommodate 32 more for Iron Abbey, which seats 100 now, and 60 more for na Brasa. On the Thursday night we were there in early July, na Brasa served about 200 dinners. We were told that reservations were highly recommended on weekends and that on a Saturday night na Brasa might serve from 400 to 500 dinners. Na Brasa is open every night of the week for dinner, and Iron Abbey is open every day for both lunch and dinner.

While it would probably cost you about \$15 to \$20 to park at either downtown Brazilian steakhouse, na Brasa has a huge, free parking lot.

For more information, call 215-956-0600 (na Brasa) or 215-956-9600 (Iron Abbey), or visit www.nabrasa.com or www.ironabbey.com.



BLOOMING GARDEN IN WYNDMOOR: Wyndmoor resident Maria Hasenecz, owner of Livable Landscapes, shared her blooming garden recently with a host of other women business owners in an effort to conduct vertical marketing with other women in the home industry. From lower left is Diane Menke, partner in Myers Constructs, Inc.; Hasenecz; Sue Rein and Karen Givnish, interior designers with The Great Room in Blue Bell. Top row from left, Mary Costello of Wyndmoor, owner of City Planter, based in Northern Liberties; Allison Pottage of Oreland, a certified arborist with SawATree's Main Line office; Kate Cleveland, a Chestnut Hill-based architect; Carol Bates of Bates Photography, Inc. in Mt. Airy, and Barbara Sherf of Flourtown, of CommunicationsPro, based in Oreland. The event was catered by Drake's Gourmet Foods of Chestnut Hill.