

As Seen In



## Conesus Inn

### *Prime rib is king at Conesus Inn*

#### THE PLACE

If you're down in the Finger Lakes this summer — or want to find a special place for a family milestone celebration — and want a traditional, beef-laden meal, Conesus Inn is one place to start — aged prime rib, in great generous quantities. The dining room, with a commanding view of the lake, is always full of families and groups celebrating special occasions. Long before regional wineries were offering upscale dining with a view of one of the Finger Lakes, Conesus Inn was the premier location for destination dining. For the past 45 years, the Scardilla family has offered its classic menu of beef and crab, making them a favorite with diners of all ages.

#### THE FOOD

The house specialty is, of course, aged prime rib, which comes in four sizes, ranging from about a pound to 5 pounds depending on the individual roast. Choose from the Princess, Queen, King or the Truman. No, it isn't named for the president, but for a local farmer named Truman Kine, who for years supplied the restaurant with corn and was fond of ordering a big end cut of the restaurant's beef. There is only one "Truman" per roast, so they are limited.

In anticipation of a beefy banquet, we passed on appetizers, settling on a small cup of soup. My partner chose the broccoli cheddar, which was silky smooth with broccoli that retained some bite and brightness.

My seafood bisque had the palest rosy blush and was full of bits of shrimp, clams and crabmeat. A pleasant whisper of sherry gave it depth.

When it came to the prime rib, I suspect a bit of subtle marketing influence, as manly men may feel pressure to upgrade directly to King. But as my partner observed the servings arriving at other tables, he decided that the Queen would be more than plenty.

The Iowa-farmed choice beef is aged on site. The even marbling and seasoning method also helps seal in flavors. The large cut arrived, standing well over 3 inches tall on the plate. There was plenty to enjoy, and thankfully to share. We both enjoyed slicing off tender bites and adding a dab of lively horseradish.

The meal came with a baked potato and a choice of veggie, but the rib clearly held center stage. Even

with my frequent sampling, we had more than a meal's worth to take home.

While I also love beef, I am a fan of roasted duck, and ordered it for the sake of variety. The skin was crispy and roasted to a wonderful dark mahogany. The orange sauce was not too sweet, and had bits of fresh orange mixed in. The accompanying rice pilaf was pleasant, although not surprising, and the broccoli side was crisply steamed and bright green (offering me the illusion of health in the face of protein overload!).

Don't forget the seafood. Their signature King Crab Legs or Australian cold water lobster tails can be ordered alone or as an accompaniment to your prime rib. Both offer abundant portions, and the crab legs are already split for you, allowing easy access.

Most of the desserts are commercial offerings, but we learned the crème brûlée was homemade. We ordered one to share and were delighted, proclaiming it one of the best we've sampled in the region. The sugar topping was superfine, and melted until sheer and fragile as amber stained glass. It broke with a satisfying crackle, revealing a silky custard underneath, infused with minuscule dots of vanilla bean seed. Save a little room for this simple indulgence.

#### THE DRINKS

On a busy night, you may spend some time enjoying a cocktail in the bar while you wait. Two levels tall, it is full of an eclectic array of collectibles including a pump organ, a vintage wood cooking stove and a stained glass window rescued from a former local church. The wine list is modest in both scope and price, and includes some Finger Lakes offerings as well as some reasonable wines by the glass.

#### THE ATMOSPHERE

Both dining rooms have a bank of windows that offer a fine view of the lake. They are decorated with the same blend of classic linen service and collectible accessories. Hanging painted glass oil lamps line the front windows of one room, while a chandelier anchors the other.

#### THE SERVICE

Several servers took care of us. They were pleasant and efficient, although one was a bit enthusiastic, coming to clear while we were still working at our courses



The house specialty at the legendary Conesus Inn is aged Iowa prime rib, which comes in four sizes, ranging from about a pound to 5 pounds depending on the individual roast. MATT WITTMAYER staff photographer

### Conesus Inn

**Address:** 5654 East Lake Road, Conesus.

**Phone:** (585) 346-6100.

**On the Web:** [www.conesusinn.com](http://www.conesusinn.com).

**Hours:** Summer hours, 4 to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.

**Seating capacity:** 170.

**Diet:** Vegetarian (A carnivore destination, but will accommodate dietary needs).

Low-carb (Absolutely! Will sub for starch sides).

**Access:** Main entrance has stairs. Level access via a driveway to the right of building.

Restrooms not wheelchair-friendly.

**Kids:** \$5.95, five items.

**Parking:** Private lot across Lake Road.

**Prices:** Appetizers, \$4 to \$10. Dinners, \$19 to \$52.