

Clint Eats



BY CLINT HAMBLIN

BOSTON'S

Decadent Desserts



Bouchée's profiterole



Finale's parfait

"He's so thin, I can count his ribs," my relatives would joke as they made me eat enough cakes, candies and confectionary concoctions to put me in a diabetic coma. Putting on weight was once a problem. It still is but for very different reasons. As a food writer concerned about weight gain from eating some of our city's most decadent desserts, I wonder, "How bad is this stuff?"

"These days, the worst thing is the portion size – even if you have a calorie filled dessert," said Debra Hollon, M.S., a clinical nutrition specialist at Massachusetts General Hospital. "You have to ask yourself whether you need to eat the whole thing."

Hollon suggests sharing.

"Those huge portions are usually enough for two or three people. Sharing gives you the taste without all of the calo-

ries for the entire dessert."

Boston restaurants offer a mix of seriously high calorie delights and a few healthier alternatives that really aren't so bad. Let's look at both.

Finale Desserterie & Bakery is located at Park Plaza and is Boston's premier dessert restaurant featuring delicious salads and entrées along with gorgeous architectural sugar structures. In a business where most pastry chefs are relegated to a corner in the kitchen, Finale's executive pastry chef Nicole Coady gets to run this kitchen.

Coady's Strawberry Shortcake includes buttery sugar cookies with fresh strawberries tossed in rhubarb sauce and served with Bavarian cream and fresh whipped cream. How many calories? Nobody knows, but it's up there. I guess the safest attitude is: "Don't Ask – Don't Tell."

Bouchée Urban Brasserie is located at 159 Newbury Street. The menu includes everything from exquisite escargot to the humble hamburger. The dessert menu suggests perfect profiteroles with vanilla bean ice cream and chocolate sauce. Add fresh berries and you have an incredible dessert. With a glass of Bouchée's blueberry sangria, *ooh la la c'est magnifique!*

BoYO just opened in the Charles River Plaza shopping center and you won't believe how healthy everything is. Standard flavors of frozen yogurt, sorbet and gelato along with several flavors you never heard of are being featured. Oh sure, you can add M&Ms and candies to the top of your favorite fruit-flavored dish turning healthy into decadent, but you can also have a delicious dessert with half the calories. Each week, BoYO introduces one or two new sugar-free, low-fat desserts. You won't believe how delectable the sugar-free strawberry is. It's not exactly calorie free, but it's lighter and healthier than most dessert choices.

Oceanaire, located at 40 Court Street, is famous for its oysters, clams, lobster and great seafood dishes. You wouldn't expect to find a classic decadent dessert at a restaurant that serves the best Vietnamese Tuna you'll ever eat.

John Nugent, one of my favorite Boston waiters, presented me with a Baked Alaska birthday bombshell, flames et al. Looking like a small albino bomb, covered in marshmallow cream, the "151" rum was lit and poured over the entire dessert. In a minute, the marshmallow was toasted and then cut with a warm

knife revealing a spumoni-like cherry ice cream center on top of chocolate ice cream on top of a thin chocolate cake that just happened to be soaked with the "151" rum. Look out, this most decadent of all desserts has got to be the worst, best and most delicious of all. What's the caloric content? Are you kidding? It's well over the recommended maximum – for an entire month.

Hollon suggests using the internet to lookup calorie amounts.

"Calorieking.com is a great place to check out the calorie amounts of food you like to eat," Hollon said.

But if you're like me, desserts have a tendency to cause a temporary Alzheimer-like condition. As the spoonful of calories slowly makes its way to my mouth, I momentarily forget – everything!

VLORA Mediterranean Restaurant

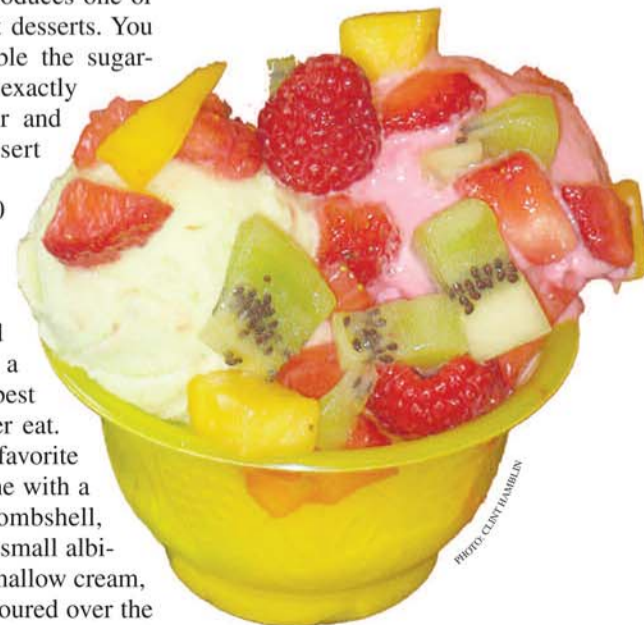


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