

The Majestic

\$\$ FOOD: 8.5 AMBIANCE: 7.8 SERVICE: 7.9

911 King St., Alexandria; 703-837-9117; www.majesticcafe.com

Open for lunch, Monday through Saturday, dinner daily.

Don't be fooled by the folksy descriptions and commonplace ingredients sprinkled about the Majestic's easily approachable menu.

This type of home cooking requires incredible skill.

Though she makes every meal seem effortless, Majestic toque Shannon Miller has carved out a niche for herself as one of my favorite maternal stand-ins. Staff play their part in every faux homecoming by keeping the dishes coming and fun-to-sip libations flowing (if only most family gatherings were this efficient and/or entertaining).

A seafood salad of shredded crab and plump shrimp poured into a meaty avocado and drizzled with champagne dressing was so tempting, it barely survived the trip around the table.



Heavenly chicken—brined so the meat spills forth juice and studded with salt crystals devilishly twinkling from within the folds of its deep-fried flesh—produced long periods of determined chewing (the crackling of the golden crust giving way to garbled sighs of satisfaction) followed by high praise for all things country picnic.

Mammoth slices of cobbler reveal big, syrupy-sweet peach quarters baked beneath a delightfully crumbly strudel soaked through in rich, bean-y vanilla ice cream.

Married to the Mid-Atlantic

“Red’s” Maryland She-Crab Soup