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WHAT'S NEW

OPENINGS: KULETO'S EPIC ROASTHOUSE & WATERBAR

Waterbar reflects bayside setting with sustainable fish

Cylindrical floor-to-ceiling aquariums telegraph the focus of Waterbar, the fish-heavy half of Pat Kuleto's new 200-seat waterfront venture, which opened Tuesday on the Embarcadero. If the sustainably sourced fish behind the glass, chosen in consultation with the Monterey Bay Aquarium, aren't gazing out with curiosity, perhaps it's because their relations are being carried from the kitchen in every form imaginable. A smaller set of tanks by the kitchen holds a less-fortunate collection of creatures.

The stylings are less heavy metal than at Epic Roadhouse next door, but the tanks' cast fittings, plus the vaulted brick ceiling, neo-deco trim and pre-worn metal bar top, manage to meld an aesthetic of soigné SoMa loft and soigné tramp steamer. The Bay Bridge, outside the tall windows, almost jumps into your lap. Virtually every seat has a conversation-stopping view.

The team: Pat Kuleto assembled a team including co-owner Mark Franz (Farallon), managing partner Pete Sittnick, executive chef Parke Ulrich and executive pastry chef Emily Luchetti.

The cuisine: Every possible riff on the ocean's bounty from near and far, including oysters every which way. Raw and near-raw options range from geoduck ceviche to a hearty house-cured tuna, while larger plates keep the focus

on quality fish — whole fish are offered by the pound, while a take on fish and chips involves a whole fried head-on rock cod. There's a handful of options like osso buco for the fish-averse.

The vibe: The sleek waterfront theme leans toward sophisticated, with a tiny dose of salty seaside shack. Swelling bay waters just beyond the windows complete the effect.

Waterbar, 399 The Embarcadero (between Folsom and Harrison streets), San Francisco; (415) 284-9922 or waterbars.com. Lunch, dinner daily. Starters, \$9-\$18; live shellfish and whole fish priced by the pound; entrees, \$28-\$75; desserts, \$9-\$10. Full bar. Reservations and credit cards accepted.

— Jon Bonné



Floor-to-ceiling aquariums anchor Waterbar, a seafood restaurant with everything from oysters to fish by the pound.