

WEEKEND

Red eye

Saturday
AUGUST 27, 2011

★ FREE ★

A Chicago Tribune
publication

GET REFR
redeyechicago

HOW SWEET IT IS

Grab a straw, y'all, and try this Southern take on tea **pages 6-7**



tweet us @mmdxdining **brunch**

Easy being green

By Lisa Arnett

The direction of dining expansion typically goes like this: Launch a successful restaurant in the city, then colonize the suburbs. But Prasino, an eco-conscious eatery with a name that means "green" in Greek, first grew its fan base in suburban St. Charles and La Grange before opening its third location in Wicker Park. After a delicious dinner charmed the hell out of me, I was looking forward to returning for breakfast, which features a massive menu served every day of the week.

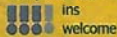
I'm still trying to forget ... how the meal started. Excited for a handful of drinks made with kombucha (\$6-\$6.50), a tart and slightly bubbly fermented tea, I ordered the apple-mint kombucha (\$6.50). I'll chalk it up to week-opened-two-weeks-ago confusion, but what

Prasino

1846 W. Division
St. 312-878-1212

Breakfast times:
7 a.m.-2 p.m.

Reservations:
Accepted, walk-ins welcome



I got instead was the kombuchamosa (orange juice and tea), and my first sip contained what can only be described as a 2-inch-long goober of orange pulp. A solid reassurance that the orange juice is fresh-squeezed, but may I suggest a strainer next time?

Feeling toasty: I've had croissant French toast. I've had pretzel pancakes. But I have never had pretzel croissant French toast. Prasino miraculously combines the fluffy, flakiness of a croissant with the chewy, toothsome outside of a pretzel into one singular pastry, and then slices two of 'em before battering and browning. With salted caramel and white chocolate sauce, you don't even need the provided butter or syrup for this to attain pure brunch bliss. The best French toast I've had all year, no question.

Good eggs: One of Prasino's signature offerings are stacks (\$8.50-\$11), open-faced sandwiches of thick toast with various toppings and eggs cooked to order. After loving the braised beef short ribs with truffle mush-



Prasino
LENNY GILMORE/REDEYE

room cabernet sauce at dinner, I couldn't resist the short-ribs stack piled with avocado, pico de gallo and cheddar. The meat was just as good, but the bread could be crispier to stand up to all that egg yolk and toppings.

There's more: I wasn't kidding when I said the menu was massive: There are omelets ranging from rustic (with merguez lamb sausage and farmer cheese, \$10.50) to luxe (lobster, caviar and truffle hollandaise, \$16)

and crepes with chocolate-covered espresso beans and vanilla whipped cream (\$10).

Bottom line: Though not every bite was perfect, I'll return to Prasino, especially because a brunch cocktail list will debut soon. The only thing harder than deciding whether to sit outside or in will be what delicious-sounding dish to try next.

LISA ARNETT IS THE METROMIX DINING PRODUCER. LMAR-
NETT@TRIBUNE.COM | @MMDXDINING