

« NICOLLET AVENUE

VS.

CATHEDRAL HILL »

# The Commodore

Jazz-age glamor returns to the neighborhood

by JASON DERUSHA and JOY SUMMERS

**JS:** I can't believe this space was vacant for so long! It feels like these rooms have been waiting to entertain guests since the 1930s.

**JD:** The exterior is a dull brick neighborhood apartment building. The inside is magic. I'm not exaggerating.

**JS:** I don't know what I was expecting for food, but the menus are very thought out. The bartenders can explain every bottle chosen (all within a day's drive, called a Bootlegger's list) and the chef can go on and on about the importance of toast. However, the toast is really more what I'd call bruschetta—and it tasted an awful lot like the bagged stuff found at Costco that I've used for many a dinner party.

**JD:** Agreed. The "Fruits of the Sea" toast had a very fishy, off-putting flavor. But don't hesitate to order the burger: top-notch local beef, Gruyere cheese, and a very nice topping of what they're calling "French onion jus." It tastes like the soup, without the mess.

**JS:** I could not agree more on all counts. My amalgamation of mussels, crab, and I-don't-know-what was a bizarre room temperature scoop of seafood. Meanwhile, that burger is a beautiful addition to those found on Cathedral Hill. This would make for an excellent St. Paul burger crawl.

**JD:** The simpler the dish the better. The poached salmon (nicely priced at \$22) was perfectly prepared, with a simple fig and almond relish. Delightful. By contrast, the grains entree was an ill-conceived dish of extremely salty wheat, topped with glazed vegetables and hen of the woods mushrooms. Not good. I really liked the fried pork scaloppini, served with glazed cabbage, apple, and smoked Gouda. You can get a sandwich version of this entree for just \$12.

**JS:** That's exactly what I did. I think the best experience at the Commodore is sitting at the bar, chatting up the staff while scarfing down the pork sandwich or the burger, wading through the cocktail list, and sharing those damn near perfect French fries with a friend.

**JD:** Service was excellent. The room is gorgeous. And the food is designed to make your picky father-in-law happy.

**JS:** And, if he isn't? There's a cold glass of locally distilled gin waiting to make everything better. **m**



PORK SCALOPPINI

## WHAT TO DRINK

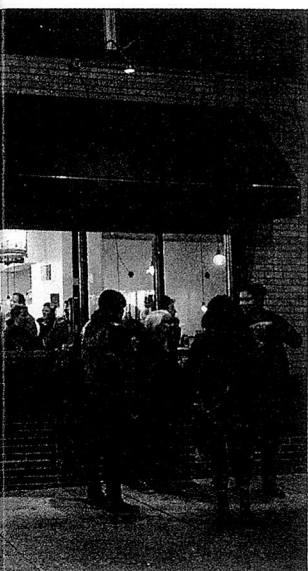
The Fitzgerald: the best big glass of gin money can buy

## WHERE TO SIT

Just walk in and sit in one of the two lounges

## CELEBRITY NAME DROP

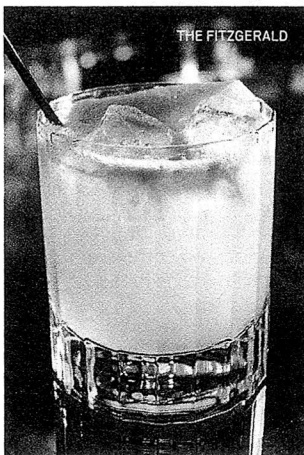
F. Scott Fitzgerald lived here in 1921



OWNERS JOSH FLORING AND MATTHEW KAZAMA



**THE COMMODORE**  
79 WESTERN AVE., ST. PAUL,  
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THE FITZGERALD



COMMODORE BURGER