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Saltine's cocktail sauce is sweet, tangy, spicy. Don't expect to learn the secret ingredient.

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Boiled Diver Scallops beautifully prepared with wild mushroom risotto, crispy kale and vanilla Riesling sauce at Saltine.

Saltine is one of the three restaurants at The Main, downtown Norfolk's newest hotel and conference center.

The restaurant is on the ground level and offers a variety of seating options. First, there is the dining area inside, the most private of the seating options. Your next choice is the bar, which is beside open-air doors and has a great view of the cocktail and raw bars that stretch the length of the restaurant. Or you can go to the patio, which overlooks Main Street, great for people-watching and views of the financial district.

Where its sister restaurants are heavy in trendy decor, Saltine is the most approachable and fitting to the area with its mix of nautical, modern elegance and historic vibe.

I grabbed a seat on the patio and took in the views of the classical Roman-style architecture of the Owen B. Pickett Custom House, the massive modern design of the World Trade Center and the Italian Renaissance-style structure housing TowneBank's offices – Norfolk's first skyscraper, dating to the 1800s.

You won't see views of the waterfront from the ground level, but the steady breeze signals that the Elizabeth River is nearby.

I visited the restaurant on a busy Thursday evening after checking out the waterfront, which is within walking distance. And I took advantage of a few of the happy-hour specials: \$5 lime daiquiris and 50-cent Jamestown oysters on the half shell and \$1 Old Bay peel 'n' eat shrimp from the raw bar.

The spread in front of me was as impressive as the architecture around me.

Mixologist Josh Seaburg changed my opinion of daiquiris. This one didn't come with fruit garnishes and whipped cream. It was served in an elegant glass, not frozen and not on the rocks, but still icy cold, not too sweet and filled with fresh lime.

The Jamestown oysters were fresh and meaty and served with a mignonette of pickled shallots and vinegar and homemade cocktail sauce. The oysters were so fresh they could have been eaten without the sauces, but the sauces enhanced the natural flavors.

The Old Bay peel 'n' eat shrimp were a piece of art – as big as the length of my hand, steamed to perfection, served with the heads on and smothered in Old Bay seasoning. Be prepared to get messy and use every bit of the wet naps provided.

The oysters and shrimp are served with Saltine's homemade cocktail sauce. This is the best cocktail sauce I've ever had. It has a barbecue sauce quality to it: sweet, tangy, a little spicy, flavorful. I asked my waitress for the secret ingredient. No luck.

As if I weren't full already, my meal was served: broiled diver scallops with wild mushroom risotto, crispy kale and vanilla riesling sauce (\$28). The dish was plated beautifully in layers with the creamy, vanilla sauce drizzled on the plate, then the risotto, kale and four large scallops.

The hint of vanilla paired well with the mild flavor of the tender scallops. And the earthiness and saltiness of the kale and mushroom offered a nice balance to the sweet sauce.

I ended my meal with the Tahitian vanilla bean creme brulee, made with lavender creme and berry compote of blueberries, strawberries and raspberries. It was a warm and creamy custard under a sweet, crunchy top with enough berries to have a little with each bite. The lavender creme was mild, but added a nice fragrance to the dish.

Chef Fabio Caparelli, a New York native, knows his way around seafood and desserts.

Saltine is a place all food lovers should go if they seek top-notch customer service, historic surroundings, quality drinks and a menu featuring a variety of local foods showcasing coastal Virginia. If the sister restaurants are as impressive as Saltine, The Main has truly delivered.