



## Maison Blanche

### serves uncompromising French cuisine in Longboat Key

By Laura Reiley, Times Food Critic

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The amuse-bouche is often a tip-off in a French restaurant that there may be some little free dessert nibbles, a tray of petite truffles or cookies or fruit gelees. Maison Blanche doesn't disappoint (a chewy chocolate caramel cube and diminutive bubblegum-flavored marshmallows — crazy, but tasty). That doesn't, however, mean you shouldn't get dessert.

The house apple tart is really the signature sweet, but it must be ordered early because it's baked to order. For an on-the-fly confection, the chocolate lava cake (\$12), with its molten, oozing center and counterpoint, a quenelle of tangy yogurt sorbet, were lovely.

A common reaction upon an initial visit to Maison Blanche is, "What is this doing here?!" It seems far too posh and Parisian for these parts. But that was Martinez's idea. Sure, he could have plopped his "white house" down in Miami or New York, but then his culinary vision might not have seemed nearly as remarkable.

*Laura Reiley can be reached at [lreiley@sptimes.com](mailto:lreiley@sptimes.com) or (727) 892-2293. Reiley dines anonymously and unannounced. The Times pays all expenses. Advertising has nothing to do with selection for review or the assessment.*

#### REVIEW

Maison Blanche

2605 Gulf of Mexico Drive, Longboat Key

(941) 383-8088

Cuisine: French

Hours: 6 to 10 p.m. Tuesday to Sunday

Details: V, MC, Amex; reservations recommended; beer and wine

Prices: Entrees \$24 to \$40, prix fixe tasting menus \$55 to \$95 per person

#### Rating out of four stars:

Food: ★★★★★

Service: ★★★

Atmosphere: ★★★

Overall: ★★★ 1/2

#### Review key:

Extraordinary ★★★★★

Excellent ★★★

Good ★★

Fair ★