

Dinner:

**Monday-Thursday**, 4:30 p.m. - 10 p.m.

**Friday & Saturday** 4:30 p.m. - midnight

Lunch:

**Wednesday, Thursday & Friday**, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

**Closed Sundays.**

910 Houston St., Fort Worth

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zambranowines.com **\$\$-\$\$\$**

## Wine & Dine

Not just a wine bar, Zambrano offers an expanding selection of lunch and dinner options.

**Two and a half years ago, Cef Zambrano left Del Frisco's, where he had managed the wine program for more than 10 years, to open Zambrano Wine Cellar.** Located downtown near the convention center, it offers hundreds of wines, along with a menu that continues to develop with the restaurant.

Perfect for a laidback post-work drink or a romantic date-night dinner, Zambrano is small and intimate with low lighting. An illuminated amethyst gemstone bar is the room's focal point, and high-backed banquettes surround the room's perimeter. Paintings of wine decorate the walls, and a glass wine cellar gives patrons a glimpse at the wine bar's offerings.

When waiting for meals, diners receive slices of baguette, along with French herbed butter made in-house. Appetizer options include Escargot a la Borguignone — which is escargot broiled in garlic butter enhanced with shallots and Parmesan cheese — along with simpler options like Prosciutto-Wrapped Asparagus.

On our most recent visit, we chose the Filet Bruschetta, which was a new addition to the restaurant and wasn't on the menu. Thin slices of flavorful filet mignon topped five toasted slices of baguette. Caramelized onions and sautéed mushrooms set on top of the meat. A side of horseradish-Dijon cream sauce added kick to the appetizer. Serving both as a garnish and palate cleanser for the bruschetta's heavier notes, five thinly-cut apple slices were each topped with a pecan.

Entrée options at Zambrano include the wine bar's signature pizza, which is meant for sharing and includes pepperoni, jamon serrano (dried-cured Spanish ham), artichoke hearts, bell peppers, red onions, mushrooms, and black olives. It also offers several salads for those looking for lighter options.

But it's the restaurant's entrees with homemade sauces that really stand out. We couldn't resist trying the Filet Mignon (\$26) with a wine-mushroom sauce. The eight-ounce steak was well seasoned.



*A mixed taste treat with a nice crunch from the asparagus spears.*

It had a nice sear on the outside and was moist and flavorful. They grilled the steak in a panini press and finished cooking it in the oven; however, it wasn't evenly cooked.

The steak was served on a bed of mashed potatoes. Although the potatoes were tasty, they were a bit too salty. The red wine and mushroom sauce made the dish, providing a strong depth of flavor to both the steak and mashed potatoes. On the side, asparagus spears were well salted and had a nice amount of crunch.

We also tried the Seared Salmon entrée (\$18). On its own, the salmon was average, but paired with its lemon-dill sauce, it sang. The creamy sauce had an ample amount of dill and ensured that the fish was moist and flavorful. Mashed potatoes, asparagus, and several baby carrots rounded out the dish.

For dessert, we opted for the crème brûlée (\$7). Made with vanilla beans from Madagascar, the custard was infused with ruby port for a wine-bar twist. Beautifully caramelized, the crunchy top layer of sugar gave way to the cold, creamy custard. Whipped cream and several slices of strawberry completed the dessert.

Throughout the meal, our server was attentive, and she was knowledgeable about the restaurant and its offerings. Zambrano, the owner, introduced himself to our table and checked on us several times throughout our meal. Both friendly and helpful — without being overbearing — he offered wine suggestions and explanations, and helped round out our positive experience at Zambrano Wine Cellar. **fw**