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finedining

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★★★★

View

3 Consuelo Pl., Oakdale
631-589-2694, viewoakdale.com

COST \$\$-\$\$\$\$

SERVICE Attentive, accommodating, professional
AMBIENCE Sunny dining room, dockside tables overlook Great South Bay

ESSENTIALS Open Monday-Tuesday, noon to 9 p.m.; Wednesday-Thursday, noon to 9:30 p.m.; Friday, noon to 11 p.m.; Saturday, 6 to 11 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., with brunch seatings at 11 and 11:30 a.m., 1 and 1:30 p.m.; dinner starts at 4 p.m. Weekend reservations recommended. Major credit cards accepted. Wheelchair accessible.

William K. Vanderbilt, the wealthiest man in the country, built one of the grandest Gilded Age mansions on his 900-acre estate in Oakdale. It was called Idle Hour. His land fronted Great South Bay and extended along the Connetquot River.

Today, you may eat better than he did.

View, on property once part of the holdings, is a sunny destination for dining and drinks, for its location, design, style. Closing in on a decade, View now feels younger and brighter. And it has definitely improved on what already was very good.

Be seated outdoors or in, enjoy the scenery from the patio, watch the boats motor by, notice children trying to net their own catch at the yacht marina.

You'll be comfortable at almost any table, but especially either those at the windows, separated by blue-and-white ginger jars, or the alfresco ones, which require only the weather's teamwork.

Smoothly overseeing View is general manager and wine director Joseph Scalice, who co-owned the acclaimed, and missed, March in Manhattan and managed Long Island restaurants including Tellers: An American Chophouse in Islip and Thom Thom in Wantagh.

Chef William Muzio has been at View since 2010. His resume includes stellar stints at the pioneering but gone Pacific East in Amagansett and the recently shuttered East by Northeast in Montauk.



Diners enjoy the waterfront as well as the food at View in Oakdale, on the land of the former Vanderbilt estate. The back deck sometimes has live music.

Some favorites from View's early years remain staples. Ample, savory crab cakes benefit from mango salsa and Meyer lemon aioli. Crisp "Thai calamari" keeps its appeal with peanuts, lime and cilantro. Crunchy, diverting Beijing duck tacos have just enough hoisin, plus avocado.

Muzio's openers also include a delectable fig-and-housemade ricotta toast on sourdough, sweetened with local honey and paired with raisins on the vine. You'd eat it for breakfast.

At lunch, try the lobster salad roll, generous and well seasoned, heaped onto a toasted, buttery bun. Anytime, pick the crab and shrimp cocktails, and the day's East and West Coast oysters. Lobster bisque, however, doesn't have the depth you expect, and the summer corn-and-crab chowder, amply tomatoed, is a bit bland. Ceviche of shrimp, while presented prettily in a half coconut, could use another shot of citrus.

View serves fine nigirizushi and sushi rolls. But the best choice is silky, slightly spicy yellowtail jalapeño finished with ponzu sauce.

Veering west, Muzio prepares a terrific bucatini with littlenecks and cockles, sparked peperoncino and given added texture with toasted breadcrumbs. You'll be dipping bread into the roasted garlic-and-white wine broth till your plate is dry.

Muzio excels with swordfish

teriyaki, playfully capped with watermelon salsa and set on coconut risotto; and swordfish with corn, chorizo, fava and roasted tomatoes in a vivid Calabrian-style tomato broth. Meaty yellowfin tuna a la plancha, best rare, gets a boost from a coconut-curry emulsion. Ginger-lemongrass broth and kaffir lime accent a snowy slab of halibut, which arrives with vermicelli, and hon-shimeji and shiitake mushrooms.

The "lobster trinity" translates into a lush, butter-poached, crab-stuffed two-pounder, accompanied by lobster-truffle risotto and lobster-tarragon butter.

If you're not set on seafood, View sends out tender braised short rib of beef, with a surprisingly tasty parsnip-white chocolate puree, and juicy roasted chicken with cippolini onions and fingerling potatoes. The chef's cheeseburger, with bourbon bacon-onion marmalade, rests on a bun seasoned as if it were an everything bagel.

For dessert, there's sticky toffee pudding cake with fig-honey gelato; cheesecake with a creme brulee top; a dark chocolate brownie festooned with a chocolate chip cookie, peanut butter mousse, whipped cream and hot fudge, served in a skillet.

But gelati and sorbets will do, too, after a couple of leisurely, very rich, idle hours.

View's best



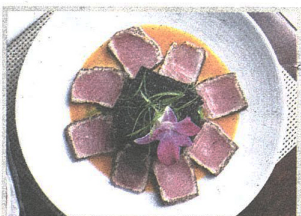
Jumbo lump crab cakes with mango salsa and Meyer lemon aioli are a savory appetizer. \$18



The lobster salad roll, with a buttered and toasted top-sliced bun, brings together Long Island and New England. \$28



Bucatini with littleneck clams and cockles is finished with a roasted garlic-white wine broth. \$24



Rosy yellowfin tuna a la plancha with forbidden rice is served atop a coconut-curry emulsion. \$35

AVERAGE MEAL PRICE PER PERSON \$ = \$25 \$\$ = \$40 \$\$\$ = \$60 \$\$\$\$ = \$100 ★★★★★ Exceptional ★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Very good ★★ Good none Poor