

Gray's bistro boasts gourmet German fare

LYNN

REVIEW

By **CHRIS STEVENS**

THE DAILY ITEM

/ RESTAURANT

Lowell Gray, best known as the founder of Shore.net, has taken two small buildings on a non-descript stretch of street and turned the smaller of two into a trendy but cozy bistro with a decidedly German menu.

When you first walk into the oblong violet walled space two things strike you: The artwork by Cape Cod artist David Kupferman and Gray.

Gray is like a Wal-Mart greeter, when he's not chatting with customers tableside he stands at the door and greets everyone who comes in, which is nice. He is clearly excited by his new venture.

When he stopped by the table I was sharing with my husband Friday, Gray said he enjoyed people and making a connection with them, which is one of the reasons he wanted to open a restaurant, that and his love of good food. And he has plenty of that at the Oxford Street Grille.

The menu is manageable, but its items don't come cheap and it is all a la carte so prices can add up fast.

Appetizers range from \$8 to \$13 and include dishes such as steak or tuna tartar, Gefilte fish and Drei Kaviars.

There are also two salad choices, two soup choices and side dishes such as asparagus, sauerkraut, creamed potatoes, latkes, frites and pretzel sticks.

The pretzel sticks, or pretzel bread, was also served up in a V-shaped dish in lieu of a breadbasket and is outstanding. It has a pastry taste with the texture of bread and just a hint of pretzel salt and is made fresh in-house.

The entrees, ranging from \$20-\$29, are a little daunting at first read because they come with quite the dramatic flair. Once you read through the trendy aspects, however, you'll find there is something for everyone: fish, chicken, red meat, even wiener schnitzel. The presentations are impressive without making you think, "How the heck do I eat this," and the tren-

diness works.

My husband had the Seared Rare Ahituna with sesamed red sauerkraut, scallions, Japanese horseradish, Goma beet gastrique and shoyu-creamed lentils (\$27). While he was dubious upon its arrival because it was extremely rare, he was pleasantly surprised.

In his best restaurant-snob voice, he said the sauerkraut, "was a little tangy, which is a little conflicting but a nice break for the palate."

After much deliberation I went with my first instinct and ordered the brisket. You don't often see brisket on a menu and I was curious. I was not disappointed. The brisket came fanned out on the plate partially covering a warm slightly crusty potato knish and a scoop of wilted greens. It was delicious.

Since we had started out with the steak tartar (fabulous) and Drei Kaviars (which came set atop a tiny purple potato, a new potato and a scoop of sweet potato) we didn't order any side dishes and we didn't go away hungry.

There is a short list of desserts offered and several coffees and teas, which is nice though I thought \$4 for a small pot of tea a little steep. Tea aside the place is a real gem.

There is also a nice wine list, a beautiful bar and the service was good though they haven't quite found their groove yet which is understandable since the place had only been open a week.

I applaud Gray for bringing a little bit of Boston-esque dining to Lynn, but I can't help wonder if it will last. If Central Square's revitalization truly holds, perhaps there will be enough condo dwellers to give Gray a good long run.

If not, he is going to have to rely on locals to forsake an evening in Boston for an evening in Lynn. In its favor however, is a charming little bistro with ample free parking along Oxford Street, no tolls or traffic to suffer and it's in your own backyard.