

restaurants

HOW THEY RATE

★★★★	Exceptional
★★★	Excellent
★★	Very good
★	Good
none	Fair
\$\$\$\$	Average meal \$100, pp
\$\$\$	Average meal \$60, pp
\$\$	Average meal \$30, pp
\$	Average meal \$15 or less, pp

Porters on the lane

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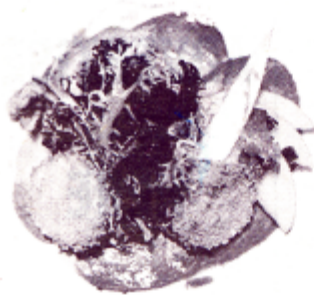
FOOD ★★

19 Bellport Lane
Bellport
631-803-6067
portersonthelane.com

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

AMBIENCE Very good
SERVICE Very good
ESSENTIALS Dinner every day, starting at 5 p.m. Lunch, Thursday to Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. All major credit cards accepted. Steps at entrance.

Bright as an autumn leaf, Porters on the lane drops in as the type of restaurant every neighborhood needs: friendly, upbeat, fairly priced, very good. The new spot is so old-fashioned, it's refreshing, down to the attentive service and welcoming style. Porters takes over the address of the Bellport Chowder House and the makeover is complete. The eatery does get noisy. But you'll enjoy the inviting bar; homey, busy dining room; and especially the attractive porch for an alfresco lunch on a crisp weekend afternoon, maybe before some intense pumpkin picking.



Warm goat-cheese salad



PHOTOS BY CHARLES ECKERT

Porters on the lane features a homey dining room; below right, chef Sean Blakeslee

THE BEST

Chef Sean Blakeslee's seasonal menu includes a fine, slightly sweet butternut squash soup balanced with a swirl of crème fraîche; and, at least earlier this month, cheese-stuffed, fried zucchini blossoms, flanked by pesto and a tomato compote. Also good: the special goat cheese salad. His meaty crab cake gets two-way support from guacamole and mango chutney. A trio of mini-lobster rolls casually and flavorfully highlights lunch. So does the juicy cheeseburger with a hillock of fries. Arugula, fennel, orange and farro give mild, whole, grilled branzino a fresh Mediterranean ac-

cent. A moist one-pounder is the centerpiece of the lobster bake, which adds mussels, clams, red bliss potatoes and corn on the cob. The excellent Brandt Beef strip steak arrives with a sauce boat, either au poivre or Bordelais, neither necessary. Extremely tender filet mignon heightens the competition. The root beer float is an apropos finale. And those warm chocolate-chip cookies come with a glass of milk — cute, and good, too.

THE REST

Baked clams lose their texture, and just become part of a heavy, pasty mix. Routine fried calamari.



Shrimp cocktail: standard. The porterhouse steak for one trails both the strip and the filet mignon.

THE BOTTOM LINE

An early holiday gift.