

# A & E, etc.

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Served in a tequila lime sauce, the Mexican Drunken Shrimp is worth trying.

## Drinks or not, winery shines

My husband and I are beer people. For a variety of reasons, wine just isn't our thing. So we weren't exactly buzzing with excitement when we headed to review Cooper's Hawk Winery & Restaurant (3815 E. 96th St., 574-9463).

But we were when we left.

Cooper's Hawk, a small Illinois-based chain, opened its first Indiana location last month in the sprawling former home of Bahama Breeze. To get to the dining room or bar, patrons must navigate a gift shop (think an upscale Cracker Barrel) and past a display case full of house-made chocolates that went a long way toward improving my enthusiasm.

**DINING**

**COOPER'S HAWK WINERY & RESTAURANT**

We went for a late lunch on a weekday and pretty much had our choice of tables—after we refused the seater's attempt to put us right next to the only other diners in the place. Really? Dozens of empty tables and you think we want to be able to reach out and touch a stranger? I understand trying to minimize server mileage, but c'mon, people!

While we perused the expansive menu, our server brought tasting samples of the special Winemaker's Barrel Reserve, which changes periodically. As novices, we appreciated the no-risk policy that allows patrons to taste any vintage before ordering. The menu also lists suggestions for wine pairings with each item.

We opted against a liquid lunch, but ordered enough food that we ended up with dinner, too. First up: the Mexican Drunken Shrimp appetizer (\$11.99)—bacon-wrapped grilled shrimp served atop fresh guacamole and a tequila lime butter sauce. The flavor combination was heavenly—bacon really does make everything better—but we would have preferred the meat to be warmer. Maybe if the guacamole were served on the side? The sauce was sop-it-up delicious, so we made good use of the

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## Home on the range for the holidays

Harmonica is highlight of this year's 'Yuletide'

**T**his week, five holiday shows—with and without cynicism.

The most heartfelt, inspiring moment in this year's "Yuletide Celebration"—and perhaps the most beautiful moment I've experienced in the eight Indy holiday shows I caught this season—came at an unexpected time ... during the encores.

True, there were earlier highlights. The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra's zesty "Here We Come a Caroling," a perky "All I Want for Christmas is You" showcase for the singers and dancers, and a downright hilarious performance by guest magicians Les and Dazzle all helped make the seasonal show bright.



**LOU'S VIEWS**

Lou Harry

It was during the encore, though, long after the puppet reindeer had made their way down the aisle, the Santas had tapped away, and "O Holy Night" had been belted, that the true magic occurred.

That's when Mike Runyan, who had earlier added just the right touch of folksiness to his solid musicianship with a sweet rendition of "Home for the Holidays," paired beautifully with hostess Sandi Patty on "I'll Be Home for Christmas." It's becoming a tradition at such holiday shows to acknowledge the men and women of the armed forces who can't be with their families over the holiday season, but this ideal combination of performers, instruments and arrangement transcended what I've come to expect.

I hope Santa forgives me, but I'm compelled to add that an attempt to celebrate the 25 years of Yuletide with a video presentation felt more like the "In Memoriam" segment on the Oscars than a joyous look back. And while Patty was personable throughout, her delivery and arrangements sometimes crossed the line from spiritual to strident.

The holiday is, of course, a religious one, but a few numbers felt less like heartfelt professions of faith and more like presumptuous religious demands. A year ago, I lamented that the musical joy of Indianapolis Symphony's

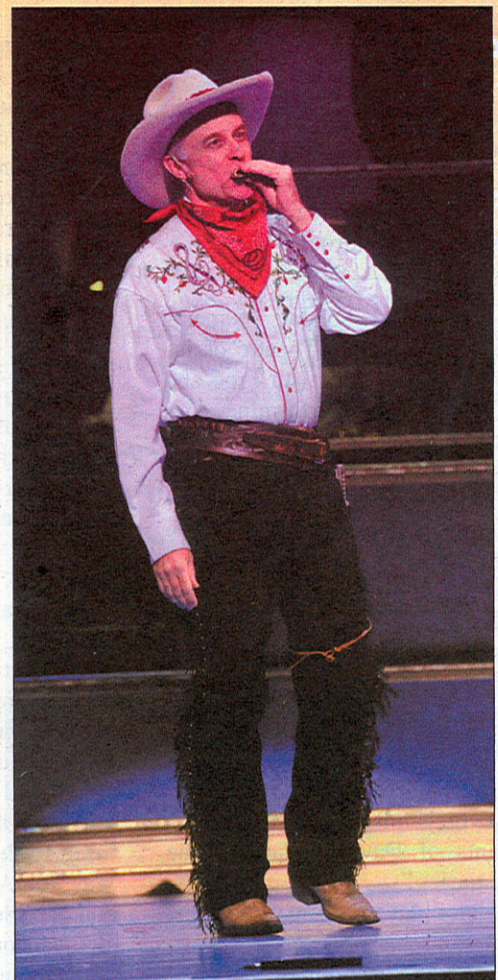


Photo Courtesy of Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Mike Runyan added down-home musical charm to this year's "Yuletide Celebration."

"Yuletide Celebration" was marred by the sideshow acts. This year, the novelties made the show a memorable one. "Yuletide Celebration" runs through Dec. 23.

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