

A PENINSULA TRADITION 40 YEARS STRONG

LOCATION/INFO:

1921 El Camino Real Palo Alto (650) 321-6798 sundancethesteakhouse.com

HOURS:

LUNCH: Mon-Fri, 11:30-2. DINNER: Sun-Mon, 5-9; Tues-Sat, 5-10.

ABOVE, L TO R: ARON AND GALEN FLETCHER

THE SUN NEVER SETS ON SUNDANCE. Now in its 40th year with the second generation in charge and the third generation already on board, it's a family-run success story still going strong.

Originally opened as Sundance Mine Co. by Robert Fletcher, a restaurant industry pro and skier who named it after a copper mine near the Park City, Utah, ski area, it had an old west, Indiana Jones style atmosphere. Sundance was a hit from day one. In the 1980's they expanded the menu to include both seafood and pasta dishes, and transitioned the atmosphere to that of a classic sporting club.

Ten years later, after successful careers in other fields but having worked in the restaurant as teenagers, Robert's sons Galen and Aron Fletcher joined the business. They took it over in 1998, eventually focusing their emphasis on steaks and adopting to the restaurant's current name to reflect that.

As you might expect for a steakhouse, the menu is traditional with USDA prime certified Angus beef, seafood, big baked potatoes and a large, mostly California based wine list. The club-like restaurant features a candle lit mahogany dining room, dark leather booths, vintage sports memorabilia, and antiques. But it's the little touches that bring generations of customers back year after year. Not many other places still serve slow roasted prime rib these days, or chill your salad fork, offer warm sourdough bread, or bring your dessert complements of the house on your birthday, all of which are de rigeur at Sundance. Not only that, but they don't charge room fees or minimum prices for private parties.

Galen and Aron's goals are to treat their employees like family, help their customers celebrate the fine food and atmosphere, and follow their father's words of wisdom: Do the right thing and you'll always be okay.

Look around when you come to Sundance. Among the high tech entrepreneurs, Fortune 500 executives and other patrons, you're also sure to see a Fletcher brother. At least one of them is on the premises at every meal, making sure their goals are met.

—Amy Sherman