

My mom is such a fan of [Et Voila!](#), in the Palisades, that she requested the Belgian restaurant for her 90th birthday, where she would have ordered waffles (“the best!”) had only they been served at night. Me? I go for the **superlative steamed mussels**, presented in a double-decker pot, the top of which is used for empty shells. My current pick involves a base of creamy red curry, resonating with lemon grass and ginger. But the stars of the show are the plump [Dutch-style mussels](#) themselves, which chef-owner Claudio Pirollo buys from a Belgian family in Maine. Eaten in tandem with Et Voila!’s crisp golden fries, the best around, the mussels make a joyful meal for just under \$25. No one-trick pony, the restaurant checks off a number of boxes. Its hamburger is a tower of juicy Oregon beef and glossy toasted bun; its desserts run to such lovelies as floating island; and if you’re looking for privacy, this charmer, renovated two years ago, offers spaces in three sizes, my favorite of which is the tall, 10-seat chef’s table in the rear.

*5120 MacArthur Blvd., 202-237-2300, [etvoiladc.com](http://etvoiladc.com).  
Entrees, \$18.95 to \$33.95.*