



By Judie Dweck / The Goods / Published on Tuesday, April 19, 2016

Fine Dining Italian Style at Sergio's

Sergio's Ristorante in Pelham, recently celebrated its one year anniversary. I was very impressed with it at its opening, and upon revisiting last week, I was delighted to find it better than ever. Pansies and tulips were starting to add color to the perimeter of Sergio's to welcome the arrival of spring.



We were shown to our white linen clad table in the elegant main dining room. A large floral arrangement which is freshened weekly, was the centerpiece of the room. The walls are enhanced with large black and white photographs of Italy. Separated by a staircase leading up to an additional dining room is the bar and lounge area. Mellow Frank Sinatra music was playing in the background.

Co-owners are Sergio Gashi and his cousin Nick Gashi of TuttaBella fame. I had the pleasure of savoring a delicious meal with General Manager Alban Gashi, the eldest son of Sergio. He has been honing his skills in the restaurant business since his early teens under the tutelage of his experienced father, Sergio. From busboy at Latanzi in the theater district, to Valbella Steakhouse and TuttaBella in Scarsdale, he possesses all the skills of a seasoned host and manager. "It is important to make our guests feel special. We aim to be a sophisticated staple in the Westchester community. Our guests often comment that dining at Sergio's is like getting away and dining in the city, without the traffic. Serving our guests is like theater. We are putting on a show for them and they enjoy being entertained. The best part of my work is meeting people. Dealing with volume on weekends causes some pressure but we deal with the hustle and bustle with a smile. I have learned the importance of having a positive attitude, being a leader, working with my staff and teaching by example so the staff becomes motivated and optimistic, as well."



We nibbled on crunchy country bread, house-made flatbread, and chunks of cheese as we perused the menu. The antipasti included favorites that I enjoyed at its opening, grilled octopus, clams oreganata and a tower of grilled vegetables. Upon this visit, I couldn't resist the ostriche con spinaci. The large ruffled shells encased whole bluepoint oysters and spinach mixed with cream and brandy. The combination was elegant and just divine. Beef carpaccio was another winner. The thinly sliced filet mignon was topped with tart arugula, onion and capers and shaved parmesan and drizzled with a touch of truffle oil, a classic dish so beautifully executed. New to the menu is the popular tuna tartar. Here, the coarsely chopped fresh tuna was layered with avocado and a citrus dressing. Triangles of fried won ton skins were the perfect scoops for this fresh from the sea delight. Other starters include sautéed baby artichokes, fried calamari, shrimp cocktail and clams casino. The common thread in all of the dishes is the use of the freshest fine ingredients. A salad of fresh beets and goat cheese, seafood salad and a creative combination of endives, apples, walnuts and gorgonzola with a champagne vinaigrette are lighter starters.



The choice of pasta dishes is varied. The gnocchi Pomodoro is excellent. The delicate morsels of potato gnocchi are bathed in tomato sauce and topped with fresh ricotta and basil, classic and tasty. A fine choice is the tagliuine nero e bianco. The strands of black and white pasta mingle with shrimp, radicchio and zucchini strips in a light garlic and olive oil sauce. It was colorful and delicious. Other good choices are pappardelle with Bolognese sauce, mushroom ravioli in brandy cream sauce, and cavatelli with broccoli rabe and sausage. Several risotto choices are offered as well.

Entrees of chicken, meat, fish and grilled offerings are numerous. We indulged in cotoletta contandina, a huge tender veal chop, grilled on the bone and surrounded by sliced potatoes, onions and red and yellow bell peppers, a dish fit for a queen.... with a very good appetite. I have enjoyed their porterhouse steak on a previous visit and each dish reinforces the fact that top quality ingredients are insisted upon here. From the fish selections, we chose a classic shrimp scampi. The jumbo shrimp rested on a bed of risotto and just enough garlic was in the sauce. It was perfection on a plate. Other possibilities are chicken martini, veal with artichokes, veal saltimbocca, baked branzino, zuppe de pesce, and a variety of grilled steaks

and chops. Daily specials may include gnocchi with lamb ragu, veal ravioli with butter sage sauce and lamb chops martini.

Lunch specials are designed to accommodate people with a time limit, with choices of appetizer, entrée and coffee. Dinner is a more leisurely affair.



Towards the back of the main dining room is pastry chef Ardi Gashi working his magic. Chef Gashi has a gift for pastry preparation and started at a very young age. He is one of the younger members of the Gashi family. Italian cheesecake, tiramisu, white chocolate mousse cake, a killer zabaglione and the best almond encrusted napoleon in town are some of his specialties. If you order in advance, you might be lucky enough to have a soufflé of coconut, pistachio, Grand Marnier or as I did, Bailey's Irish Crème. It was a heavenly cloudlike confection, a wonderful way to complete a glorious meal.

Alban Gashi describes Sergio's as, "fun, family friendly, with good food, good atmosphere and fair prices." Pay them a visit soon.

Veal Saltimbocca – Serves 2

4 veal scallops, pounded to ¼ inch thick
4 thin slices prosciutto
3 Tbsps. dry marsala wine
2 cups chicken stock
4 slices fontina cheese
1 Tbsp. unsalted butter
Salt and pepper, to taste

Season veal on both sides with salt and pepper. Melt butter in a large skillet. Press a slice of prosciutto on top of each scallop and saute in the butter for a total of 2 minute on both sides, until golden. While they are cooking add the wine and chicken stock. Top each with a slice of fontina cheese. Transfer the pan to a 250 degree oven until the cheese is melted. Place veal on a serving dish and pour sauce over it.



Judie Dweck has been writing about restaurants and food for many publications. She teaches creative cooking to children at Scarsdale elementary schools. Through the years, her articles have appeared in Jack and Jill Magazine, Spotlight, The Pleasure of Cooking and The Scarsdale Inquirer. She balances her restaurant tastings with daily ballet classes.