



By Aleesia Forni / December 2017, Wonderful Dining / November 29, 2017

Upscale Italian at Sergio's

As the saying goes, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

That adage holds especially true if your quest involves an evening at the ever-popular Sergio's Ristorante in downtown Pelham.

After hearing multiple rave reviews of the eatery, my fiancé, John, and I had planned to visit Sergio's on a recent Saturday evening. With no definite plans or timetables, I figured I'd give the restaurant a call during the early afternoon and plan our night around its availabilities.

In hindsight, this may not have been the best idea. The affable gentleman who answered my call regretted to inform me that, unfortunately, they were booked solid for the rest of the evening.

Disheartened but not deterred, I immediately made a reservation for the next evening.

With much better luck, we bundled up and headed to Sergio's on a chilly fall night.

The restaurant itself is warm, inviting and not at all stuffy, something that can be credited both to the exceptionally friendly service and the sleek, striking décor. White tablecloths and hanging industrial fixtures are accented by black-and-white photographs of some of Italy's most treasured landmarks — The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, The Colosseum, The Leaning Tower of Pisa. Gorgeous white lights hang down from window sills that line the dining room, while a trio of oversize centerpieces with red, orange and green florals add splashes of fall color. A spiraling iron staircase leads to a second-floor, 70-seat private dining space.

We took our seat near a large wooden wine rack, affording us a view of fellow diners who were an eclectic mix of families with small children, couples on a date night and a group of friends celebrating a birthday. At the crowded bar area, patrons stood around those who were seated, all chatting while taking in Sunday night football.

Taking advantage of what is the final night of Hudson Valley Restaurant Week, I chose from the three-course menu and started with tuna tartare. Topped with avocado and a zesty citrus dressing, this was a treat for the taste buds; a pair of crisp chips served alongside the dish helped us polish off the small plate.

A truly hulking slab of prime rib was served alongside broccoli rabe in an entrée we selected from the evening's list of specials. While the meat was juicy and expertly cooked, a starch would have been a welcome addition for soaking up the meat's delectable juices.



Again from the Restaurant Week menu, I opted for chicken scarpariello, which was served with thin slices of sausage and an assortment of vegetables in a garlic, lemon and white wine sauce. Bits of jalapeño added a heated kick, and I found myself reaching for my water at regular intervals.

When perusing my dessert options, I was pleased to see the inclusion of the Napoleon — something recommended by WAG's own editor-in-chief, Georgette Gouveia, who raved about this nutty yet creamy twist on a classic.

Our waiter halved the generous portion of the dessert, splitting it between my fiancé and me. John — who has accompanied me on countless dinners out, has as small of a sweet tooth as mine is large, and rarely raves about a dessert. But he found himself reaching for bites of my half after he'd finished his own.

We sampled other standout desserts, including tiramisu, topped with a trio of berries and served alongside a pumpkin spice gelato that was perfect for the chilly evening. Scoops of blood orange sorbet were pleasantly tart and topped with coconut flakes.

In a darkened dining room on a bustling evening, it's difficult to be discreet when taking photos that elicit an overwhelming flash. I attempted to stand in corners, circling the perimeter, snapping photos of the interior and giving semi-apologetic smiles to any diner who looked my way.

I was soon approached by the eatery's manager, who was nothing short of hospitable and offered to show me the “money shot.”

“Follow me,” he told me with an almost cunning smile.

He led me to the front of the restaurant and positioned me in a spot at the host's station. I snapped away, chatted for a bit and thanked him for his time before returning to my seat.

It occurred to me later that he may have misconstrued my many photos from multiple angles as my having trouble finding a suitable vantage point. In reality, the opposite is true.

At Sergio's, every spot is a “money shot” and I'm so glad that I tried, tried again.

For more, visit sergiosofpelham.com.