

Carol & Joe Davis

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SEMOLINA Italian Restaurant Classic Italian Cuisine



Chocolate Ravioli

In February, when the rain just kept coming down, we could not stay home. We ventured out on a cold and rainy Saturday night because we were craving Italian Cuisine. Petaluma has a relatively new restaurant that we wanted to try on Washington Street called Semolina. Italian Food is one of our favorites and has been a staple of the American diet since Italian immigrants came to America and to Sonoma County over a hundred years ago.

As we entered Semolina, Joe Pierano, one of the owners, warmly greeted us. He and his partner, Chef Jose Perez, have worked for notable Italian restaurants in Marin and Sonoma counties for many years and are now

realizing their dream of being restaurateurs. The restaurant was packed at 5:30 PM, which was a good sign. As we looked around the room we saw smiles, laughter and happy diners. It was a relaxed but active atmosphere. Italian music was heard playing in the background but the noise level was moderate, so we were able to easily carry on a conversation.

The Appetizers were our first course and they were all fabulous! The Fried Calamari was prepared in a "house" batter and was accompanied by lively cocktail sauce and garlic aioli. The Calamari was so tender you could cut it with a fork. Parboiling gave it the perfect consistency. This was the best Calamari ever! The Bruschetta, toasted bread



Bruschetta

with mozzarella cheese, pesto, fresh tomatoes, garlic and olive oil, was delicious and uncommonly light. Definitely have the Carpaccio, which is thinly sliced raw beef with capers, olive oil, Parmigiano cheese and Dijon mustard. It was perfect!

The second course was the salad. We had the Arugula-Beet Salad, which had yellow and red beets, arugula, spiced caramelized walnuts, and crumbled blue cheese with light raspberry vinaigrette. The third course was an excellent Minestrone Soup that was served hot and was full of vegetables.

Pasta was the next course. We tried three and loved them all: the Angel Hair Pasta Pomodoro with fresh tomatoes, garlic, and basil in a marinara sauce; the Ravioli, homemade and a house specialty; and the Butternut Squash Ravioli in walnut cream sauce, which was the most unique and a crowd favorite. There was a consensus that the Seafood Ravioli in a light lemon cream sauce and the Smoked Chicken Ravioli with peppers, spinach and mushrooms were also noteworthy.

The Entrees were all perfectly prepared with wonderful flavor. We loved the Veal Scaloppini Sec medallions sautéed with a mushroom demi glaze. The Calamari Dore is one of our favorite meals, dipped in light egg batter, sautéed with white wine, lemon, butter and cream, and very tender. The Filet Mignon with Prawns was accompanied by Swiss chard and potatoes au gratin and was quite a hearty meal. We also encourage you to share some of the sides, especially the Sautéed Mushrooms.

The Desserts were all delicious and light, but there was one that really stood out: the Chocolate Ravioli are truly one of a kind. This Chocolate Pasta is filled with Ricotta cheese, white chocolate, and Kahlua and topped

with chocolate sauce; it has vanilla ice cream on the side. We also enjoyed the Profiteroles, Puff Pastries with vanilla ice cream inside and covered with caramel and chocolate sauce and toasted almonds. They were unusually light. The Dark Cherry Cobbler was also special. The final dessert, which some felt challenged the Chocolate Ravioli, was the Pannacotta with raspberry sauce. It was exquisite! Espressos and Coffees were the perfect finish for us, but there is Sandeman Port and Ledson Orange Muscat that we'll have to try next time.

The Wines are from Italy and Sonoma and Napa Valleys. At Semolina, they say that a meal without wine is like life without love. We enjoyed the 2003 Santa Cristina Sangiovese, Tuscany, Italy, the 2002 Quivera Sauvignon Blanc, Dry Creek Valley, the 2000 Vinwood Merlot North Coast and the 2000 Riecini, Chianti, Italy. There were good choices for everyone.

Semolina is a labor of love for Joe Pierano and Jose Perez and their experience shined through. They should be very proud of what they have created at Semolina! We had course after course -- each was simply wonderful and the courses were well-paced. We had light, scrumptious desserts. We also enjoyed our selection of Italian and California Wines.

The service was timed perfectly. Our Dining Assistants confirmed that

Semolina was better than any Italian Restaurant they had been to and looked forward to coming again. We can attest to the accuracy of Semolina's slogan "Good Food, Good Wine, Good Friends, Good Times" and encourage you to enjoy the Semolina dining experience. It was a pleasure for us to write this review!



Joe Pierano, Restaurateur



Chef / Restaurateur Jose Perez

Post Notes:

SEMOLINA ITALIAN RESTAURANT
600 E. Washington St.
Petaluma, Ca 94952
707-766-6975
Open 7 Days
Lunch Mon-Fri
11:00 AM -4:00 PM
Dinner 7 Nights
4:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Major Credit Cards
Free Parking
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Carpaccio