

Pasta, dessert dishes sing that's Amore

Estelle Shanley
Special to The Desert Sun
November 11, 2006

Bring your wallet and sense of humor to Amore, a new ristorante Italiano in La Quinta.

Chances are good your reservation will be ignored, so try serving time at the bar, where the acoustics are difficult at best. This space was once occupied by Omri and Boni, and the influx of more diners and a piano player has not diminished the noise problem.

The staff can be harried, dashing from table to table to determine orders, so bring a sense of humor!

The menu moves away from traditional Italian-American dishes, although some entrées are fancied up. Hence, read the menu carefully to avoid being misled.

Some dishes are overpriced: A rotisserie chicken with lemon, garlic and herbs goes for \$29. The Chilean sea bass, served with a pesto of sun dried tomato, is similarly-priced at \$30. Grilled medallions of veal held great promise, served with a rich Madeira sauce and figs. However, we found the dry figs disappointing.

On the other hand, the minestrone soup was full-bodied with good flavor, and the salad of mixed greens with red wine vinaigrette was field fresh.

Unfortunately we cannot say the same for the risotto accompanying most entrées. Served cold in a neat mound shaped by a ramekin, it sat on the plate as a glutinous pile, devoid of flavor or delectable creaminess - the trademark of a good risotto.

Spaghetini plays a big role on Amore's menu. This very thin spaghetti comes with a choice of sauces; the best in our opinion is Putanesca - a spicy mélange of anchovies, tomatoes, onions and black olives cooked in olive oil.

Another wonderful spicy sauce is Arrabbiata, the Italian word for "angry." A tomato-based sauce, it can set the palate on fire with the addition of pancetta, a flavorful bacon, and chilis. Choice of pasta with either of these sauces costs \$20.

Chef Anthony Spinelle comes to Amore with extensive experience in Atlantic City.

For dessert, the inclusion of the ethereal Zabaglione was a welcome relief from the over-used tiramisu and canoli. Prices range between \$8 and \$12. The wine list is immense and pays homage to Italian vineyards.



Marilyn Chung/special To Desert Post Weekly
The bar at Amore Ristorante Italiano in La Quinta.

BEAUTIFUL ESCAPE

Name: Amore Ristorante Italiano

Address: 47-474 Washington St., La Quinta

Phone: 760-777-1315

Reservations: Suggested on weekends

Hours: 5-10 p.m. daily

Entree prices: \$20-\$39

Credit cards accepted: Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Diner's Club

Takeout or delivery: No

Alcohol: Full bar

Early bird specials: No

Children's menu: No

Smoking area: Patio