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Mama Mia's

Price Chopper/Taft Plaza - 185 Ballston Ave
Saratoga Springs, N Y - (518) 583-7783

Mama Mia's is located in Saratoga, but their cuisine is one hundred percent authentic Italian. I obviously eat in many superb restaurants and to say that I was impressed with Mama Mia's is an understatement. The cuisine is truly comparable to that of the most high-end Italian restaurants in our area... minus the high-end prices.

Mama Mia's has an immaculate and comfortable interior. With distressed walls, tile floor, red table cloths and green seating, the atmosphere is family friendly and inviting. Clay pots and Italian pictures add to the authenticity of the dining experience.

I knew that Mama Mia's was known for their superlative pizza, but their menu was not to be believed. From Neapolitan, Sicilian, white, Margherita, crostino, and even gluten free—the choices were endless. The menu was complete with enticing appetizers, soups, salads, and main dishes of all kinds. Everything is made in-house with the finest ingredients. As proprietor and chef, Giuseppe Grisio is quick to point out that eating well is serious business.

We began this Italian odyssey with fresh Italian bread and butter before digging into our appetizers. I ordered the cranberry, feta and pear salad, and could have not been more pleased with my selection. Fresh arugula, endive and radicchio, sweet pears contrasting beautifully with pungent feta and tart cranberries drizzled with a balsamic reduction—it was perfection. My companion opted for an appetizer special

of the evening, zuppa di pesce. A departure from the usual zuppa di pesce which is in a heavier tomato sauce, this version was in a delicate tomato broth and had a bountiful amount of jumbo shrimp, scallops, mussels, and clams. The eggplant rollatini was my choice of entrée and it was exemplary. Fresh eggplant rolled with ricotta, topped with melted mozzarella and marinara sauce—it honestly took me back to my nonna's kitchen. The freshness of the ingredients could not be denied; the eggplant was so light, and the ricotta so creamy. The marinara sauce had an ideal hint of sweetness and the angel hair pasta that accompanied my dish was a perfect al dente. My companion stayed with his seafood theme, selecting the linguine gamberi. The linguine was prepared with jumbo shrimp, roasted red peppers and fresh spinach, and sautéed in a garlic and oil sauce. Again, everything about the dish was exceptional, and my companion was enthralled with the optimal ingredients and outstanding preparation.

Though thoroughly sated, we decided we had to share a slice of their pizza. We went with the crostino and it was a dream. Imagine, a thin crust (garlic basted pan) topped with fresh-water mozzarella, sliced plump Roma tomatoes and fresh basil, and then drizzled with a touch of virgin olive oil and seasonings. The freshness of flavor exploded in our mouths. We were beside ourselves.

Believe it or not after all that indulgence, we



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had a sampling of Mama Mia's house-made desserts including ricotta cheesecake, cannoli, and tiramisu. Where do I begin? The ricotta cheesecake tasted just like my nonna's traditional ricotta pie. With an intensely creamy texture and just the right hint of lemon and orange zest, it was exceptional. The cannoli shell had an idyllic crispiness and the ricotta filling might have been even creamier than my nonna's, and that says something. The tiramisu was heavenly by any standards. While enjoying these confections, my companion and I each sipped a marvelous cup of decaffeinated cappuccino.

Everything about our evening at Mama Mia's was sensational. The food and service were noteworthy, and the portions generous. If you want a great value for your dollar, plan a trip to Mama Mia's!