

REED BROOKS, ESQ.

EPICUREAN



TRAVELER

To the "Good Life!"

Half Rack of Lamb



Owner/Host, Ross Runfola, serving up excellent food at an excellent value.

In what must've been one of the most stressful weeks of my life, I was overjoyed to do a review at la Dolce Vita. By definition, la Dolce Vita means a luxurious, self-indulgent way of life which is exactly what I needed. Even before we got to the door we were met by a very gracious, hard-working host and owner, Ross Runfola, who showed us as many tables on his Hertel Avenue patio as he has inside his restaurant. Upon entering the establishment, I was greeted with an espresso bar certainly smaller in size than a Starbucks, but certainly with much more to offer; espressos, cappuccinos, lattés, steamers, ice coffees, gourmet sodas and gelatos. As we passed from the caffè to the restaurant, we entered a different world of warm, muted colors, linen, and original art. A hand-crafted pizza oven was in the back and it seemed made for lovers with the majority of tables being for two. Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and what seemed like the Goodfellas soundtrack was playing in the background.

For an appetizer, we had an excellent sample platter. Three out of the four appetizers were vegetarian. Although all were homemade and substantial, especially the big, fresh and chunky bruschetta, I enjoyed la Dolce Vita's more unique dishes. The Bocconcini Cartocciati was fresh mozzarella with marinated red roasted peppers wrapped with imported prosciutto and served with mescaline greens and drizzled with the house vinaigrette. The Sfogliatelle di Spinace was filo dough filled with sautéed spinach, red roasted peppers and fresh mozzarella cheese served with a combination of pesto cream and red roasted pepper couli sauce. My companion loved the Stuffed Hot Banana Peppers and I could certainly relate. It was resting on a crunchy piece of toasted Italian bread which greatly added to its texture. We also tried a potato/bacon soup. With this course, we had a Pinot Grigio, the Italian Mezzacorona, and a Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand, Brancott. The Sauvignon Blanc was our favorite. It was smooth, fruity but not sweet, and it finished quite well.

For our entrées, we had the Salmon con Pistachio and a Half Rack of Lamb. The quickest choice my companion has ever made, the delicious filet of salmon was encrusted with pan seared pistachios and drizzled with a raspberry couli sauce. Although the sweetness of the raspberry sauce made this dish very special, I'm a sucker for that rack of lamb. It was perfectly prepared with a lovely sauce. With these dishes, I had Ross's suggestion of the Robert Mondavi Pinot Noir. It went well with both dishes. I also enjoyed my companion's choice of the Californian, Bel Arbor Chardonnay. Although we didn't have a pasta or pizza, I did get favorable reviews from other patrons.

For dessert, we enjoyed a huge chocolate torte



Out of Five Stars

FOOD	8	SERVICE	9
------	---	---------	---

DECOR	8	VALUE	9
-------	---	-------	---

On a scale of 1 to 10

APPETIZERS:

- Bruschetta
- Bocconcini Cartocciati
- *Sfogliatelle di Spinace
- Stuffed Hot Banana Peppers
- Potato/bacon soup

ENTREES:

- Salmon con Pistachio
- *Half Rack of Lamb

DESSERT:

- *Chocolate Torte
- Gelato: Chocolate Hazelnut and Pistachio

LIBATIONS:

- Pinot Grigio, Mezzacorona, Italy
- *Sauvignon Blanc, Brancott, New Zealand
- Pinot Noir, Robert Mondavi, California,
- Chardonnay, Bel Arbor, California Port
- *Best of Category

LA DOLCE VITA CAFFÉ & BISTRO

1472 HERTEL AVENUE
BUFFALO, NY 14216-2838

446-5690

FAX: 446-5690

TUES. – THUR. 9AM-9PM

FRI. – SAT. 9AM-10PM

CLOSED SUNDAYS AND MONDAYS

and two types of gelato; a chocolate hazelnut and the pistachio. The light and refreshing gelato we ate with little spoons that made me feel so Italian and added to our enjoyment. We found a way to not miss La Dolce Vita's lack of a liquor license by having a lovely Port with our dessert. Throughout the evening, Holly's service and the presentation of our meal was outstanding. *A toast to the good life!*

Sampler of appetizers with a view

