



The restaurant has a feel of the Renaissance age about it

GETTING IT RIGHT

Opulence and authenticity are the buzzwords at Bengaluru's latest Italian restaurant. **By Bindu Gopal Rao**

Located at the Amrest Bungalow in Indiranagar, La Tagliatella is Bengaluru's latest Italian restaurant. What sets this place apart from the numerous other Italian joints that dot the city is that it is part of a chain that has its roots in Spain. Vikas Shetty, Head - Restaurant Operations, says, "In order to ensure authenticity we import 95 per cent of our products including cheese, tomato, wheat, meats and even ice cream from Spain and Italy. We serve authentic Italian as opposed to Indianised Italian. Also we make sure that the food tastes the same whether you eat it in India or China or the USA." Naturally this raised my curiosity factor for the food a notch higher.

The opulent 4,500 sq ft restaurant is spread across three levels with 200 covers. The topmost level is being converted into a private party space that will also double up for romantic candle-lit dinners. The décor of this charming eatery is done up in hues of red and gold with dark wood furniture. The feel of the Renaissance age is accentuated with ornate chandeliers, Italian mosaics and paintings featuring real musical instruments. The menu is extensive and offers a variety that's hard to beat: More than 300 combinations of pasta and sauce, pizzas made in traditional Italian ovens, risottos, salads and desserts. All the food is cooked using extra-virgin olive oil.

In fact, the menu also has a few recommendations on how to team the right pasta with the correct sauce. For instance sauces with meat as the main ingredient are ideal for thicker pastas while seafood sauces combine well with thin strands of pasta. Also creamy sauces match best with stuffed pasta. The menu comprises Italian cuisine from the regions of Liguria, Piedmonte and Emilia-Romagna. The ingredients sourced from these places include Puglia tomatoes, Parmigiano-Reggiano DOP cheese and extra-virgin olive oil.

We started our meal with Pane della Tagliatella, a basket of bread. We ordered Focaccia bread topped with tomatoes, olives and onions, and were recommended to dunk it in a special chili-infused olive oil to enhance its taste. The bread was soft and the topping nicely crusted making the dish melt in the mouth. Breads are not served complimentary but you are given olives here. The portions of the dishes are mammoth - they can easily serve a family of four so make sure you order after



A pizza straight out of the wood-fired oven

consulting with the staff. Next, we tried the Mozzarella Gratinata, a mixed leaf salad with deep fried mozzarella, sweet corn, tomatoes, pine nuts and olives with a honey pistachio dressing. The salad was crunchy and the mozzarella was certainly the best part of this dish.

For non vegetarians the Insalata di Pate e Prosciutto d'Antara with mixed salad leaves, Foie Gras, duck ham, sweet corn, preserved tomatoes, goat cheese and roasted pine nuts on a pierina bed is a good bet. There is also an extensive selection of risottos on the menu, but I opted for the pasta as there is lot to choose from. The Porro e Pinoli is served with almonds, pine nuts, vegetable and cream and you can select the pasta and sauce you need. What arrives on the table is a delicacy that has all the ingredients blended together that makes the food unique both in taste and looks. The Carbonara made with Turkey bacon and cream is a signature pasta that is a unique offering here.

While you are here, try their 13-inch thin crust wood-fired pizzas that will leave you asking for more. The Verdue



Capesanti E Gambori Salad



Crepe



Pizza

Grigliate topped with tomato, mozzarella, onions, green pepper, mushrooms and caramelised apple is hard to resist. Also, if you love salmon go for the Affumicata topped with salmon, tomato, mozzarella and anchovies. Those with a sweet tooth will love this place as there is a separate dessert (Dolce) menu that offers some of the choicest handpicked delicacies. We had the Torta Rocher, a moist chocolate cake that simply melts in your mouth, as well as the Tre Bombe al Cioccolato, consisting of chocolate with hazelnuts served with a white and dark chocolate sauce. This is pure indulgence for the true chocolate lover. The tiramasu is another hot favourite which you can try if you go with the family as the food is certainly going to leave you feeling very full.

The service is quick and courteous. The philosophy of this restaurant is to "live the sharing experience" which is reflected in their portion sizes. Coupled with prompt valet parking this was a genuinely Italian experience and one that I would highly recommend. And yes, don't count the calories here - just let go and indulge.