

## Tutto Italia: Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

It's not often that a restaurant at Walt Disney World closes down and re-opens again almost immediately, but that's exactly what happened a few months ago at the Italy pavilion in Epcot's World Showcase.

Alfredo's -- or to give it its full name L'Originale Alfredo di Roma Ristorante -- had been a staple there for many years, but last fall it gave way to a newcomer, Tutto Italia, after Alfredo's management chose to not renew its contract with Disney. Tutto Italia is operated by the [Patina Restaurant Group](#), their first venture into Florida, but not their first Disney eatery. They also run the Catal Restaurant, Uva Bar, Naples Ristorante and Tortilla Jo's in Downtown Disney at Disneyland California, along with restaurants in New York, Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

When you first walk into the restaurant, there isn't that much to distinguish it from what went before and that's no real surprise, as there was no time to undergo a major refit. That's being saved for later this year instead. If you've dined at Alfredo's before, then the decor will be familiar to you and it's a nice feeling to walk into what's essentially a new restaurant, but immediately feel at home in surroundings you know and love.

We dined there in December using the Candlelight Processional package, mainly because we wanted to book a meal at Tutto Italia and, at the time, that was the only way we could. The package included an appetizer, entree and dessert each, so sadly we just had to sample all three courses on offer here.

There's a wide choice of appetizers, with plenty for anyone who doesn't eat meat. Choices when we ate there included an eggplant caponata with Sicilian olives, pine nuts and raisins; insalata mista with arugula and radicchio; carpaccio de salmone; and prosciutto di Parma, ham with thin slices of seasonal melon. Although all of those may sound great, we opted for something different. I went for the fresh mozzarella with vine ripened tomatoes, basil, and Tuscan olive oil, which I can thoroughly recommend. It really reminded me of the wonderful dish I had enjoyed while in Italy on our Mediterranean cruise and that's a great endorsement for any Italian restaurant. My husband opted for the cozze marinara, or to you and me, mussels in a spicy tomato and garlic sauce and, having sampled a bit (purely for research purposes you understand!), I can confirm that was another winner.

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Entrees are divided into either pasta "Tutto Italia" or fish and meat dishes (pesce and carne) on the menu, with each of us sampling one category. I tired the spaghetti with clams, cherry tomatoes, garlic and parsley - certainly an unusual combination of ingredients, but one that comes together beautifully. Other pasta options include some more conventional ones, such as penne with crushed tomatoes, fresh mozzarella and basil; lasagne al forno, a great traditional Italian dish; and tagliatelle with meat ragu Bolognese. More unusual choices include Bucatini Gratinari -- and if your Italian isn't that great, I'll translate: it's Italian Prosciutto ham, peas, Parmesan and cream -- and spaghetti with veal meatballs and pomodoro sauce.

Turning to the meat and fish, the braised pork shank with creamy polenta and root vegetables was my husband's choice, perhaps the only dish that didn't work completely for us, as the polenta didn't go that well with the pork. Under this section of the menu you'll also find fish fillet, salmon "al forno," a traditional Italian style of cooking that means "in the oven", lamb ("agnello") and chicken cutlet Milanese.

For me, the best part of any meal has to be the dessert and again, this was full of Italian delights, just like the rest of the menu. We can personally recommend the lemon sorbet (you can also pick from other delightful flavors such as chocolate, blood orange and melon pomegranate) and the zabaglione ice cream, but if you have the room for anything more, you can sample the Zuppa Inglese, which is trifle cake with candied fruit, vanilla cream and meringue; chocolate and hazelnut torte; mocha tiramisu; or even cannoli, a crisp pastry filled with sweet ricotta, chocolate and candied orange.

We really couldn't fault the food at Tutto Italia - and as the name suggests, it's certainly completely Italian, with a lot of specialties that you would only find on offer at some of the better Italian restaurants. However, the saying goes that you get what you pay for and that's the case here. This restaurant comes with a much more expensive price tag than its predecessor, although currently it's listed as one credit on the Disney Dining Plan, which makes it excellent value for anyone who's planning on using the Dining Plan.

Tutto Italia is an excellent addition to the dining line-up at Epcot and one that's well worth trying on your next visit - just be prepared to pay for that good experience if you're not on the Dining Plan.

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They*

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are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

Article last updated: 2/7/2008

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