

It's the food that counts at Villarosa

When all the factors that go into a good restaurant are considered — the food, the atmosphere, the service, the prices — there is only one thing that really counts. That's the food.

All the gracious waiters, hanging plants and low prices won't do your stomach much good if the food resembles Spam flambe.

And it is on its food that the Villarosa Restaurant has established a reputation as one of the best dining spots in Mississauga.

Oh, the atmosphere is certainly pleasant, if a bit noisy. And the service is friendly. And the prices certainly are reasonable.

But even if none of those are to your liking, you'll still leave the Villarosa knowing you've eaten Italian food at its best.

After nibbling on the Villarosa's cheese bread — French stick covered in melted Mozzarella, herbs and tomato sauce or tomatoes — you can try a light straciatella soup (\$1.75) or green salad (\$1.75) with a light, zesty oil and vinegar house dressing.

If you're a pasta fan, try the paglia e fiena alla Trasteverina (\$5.50), a large serving of tender, green and white spaghetti smothered in fresh, pounded tomatoes and small chicken pieces.

The tortellini (\$6) is a favorite of those who prefer spicier dishes. Cannelloni (\$4.75) and lasagna (\$4.50) are both made Italian-style, with bechamel sauce instead of cheese. The green linguini with clams (\$6) is also recommended.

Villarosa makes its own pasta fresh each week and it shows in all the pasta dishes.

The veal entrees (all \$7.50) are tender and masked in light sauces.

Seafood dishes include squid (\$7), scampi (\$15) and shrimp (\$8).

Desserts include the usual Italian sweets such as tar-tufo (\$1.50) and zabaglione with marsala (\$3 for two). But the favorite of the many regulars is strawberries in a creamy marsala sauce.

All these features have combined to make the Villarosa a popular spot, so popular in fact that you can expect to wait in line Friday and Saturday evenings. And because the place is often so crowded you can expect it to be a little on the noisy side.

But with so many regulars there, you often get the feeling that you've walked into a private party.

dining out

It's a place with character and owner Mike Pagliaro hopes to keep it that way.

A half-litre of the house wine is \$4.50 and most wines are reasonably priced.


Dinner for two with wine runs in the \$25 to \$30 range.

Lunch prices are under \$5.

Villarosa Restaurant, 380 Lakeshore Rd. East. Major cards accepted. 278-7930.

—CHRIS ZELKOVICH

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