

ENJOY GREAT ITALIAN FOOD AT VALENZO'S

Michael,

I hope you're hungry, because we're eating Italian tonight, at Valenzo's.

What? You've never heard of it? Boy, are you in for a treat. It's real Italian, every morsel prepared fresh daily on the premises.

IT'S A FAMILY PLACE THAT FEELS LIKE HOME

There are lots of dining enclaves and secluded booths that make you feel like it's just you and your family.

It has kind of a Mediterranean feel to it, too. Maybe that comes from the carved wooden tables with their classic coverings, the comfortable upholstered chairs, the Mediterranean wall lamps and paintings, the quiet dinner music in the background, or the noise reducing qualities of the plants. Maybe it's the warm basking light that seems so natural and so comfortable.

Even the Italian marble accents seem to glow with the same comfortable light. And you'd swear that you catch the scent of an honest-to-God sea breeze every now and then along with the grumble of a seabird searching for a snack. I've never seen the place empty, but it never appears to be crowded, and it's never been noisy. Even the kids seem to recognize the quality.

THE FOOD IS GREAT!

You'll love the food. The owners, Pietro and Rozalia (call them Pete and Rosy), are Italian, from Salerno on the west coast south of Naples - really. They've kept most of their dishes just as they served them in Italy. You can choose from an amazing variety of seafood such as Shrimp Primavera, several Calamari dishes, and Merluzzo alla Marchigiana (codfish fried in olive oil). There are chicken, beef, veal, and pork dishes if you're not interested in seafood; and pasta, lots of pasta, with sausage and meatballs - all made fresh daily.

The dinner rolls are unbelievable. They're made from scratch at Valenzo's throughout the day, using a recipe that Pete and Rosy brought with them from Italy. They'll be hot, so fresh that the grated parmesan cheese on them is still settling in, and aching to be devoured. Your famished stomach will enthusiastically help by ordering you to dip them in a dish of Virgin olive oil, more grated Parmesan, and oregano. Pete guarantees that you'll never get one that's more than an hour old. Matter of fact, if they haven't been served before they cool off, they're consigned to the crouton bin.

ANTIPASTO - BELLISSIMO!

We'll order just one antipasto. You'll understand when you see it. They're HUGE, with plenty of pepperoni, prosciutto, provolone, mozzarella, mildly hot peppers, black olives, and fresh

vegetables. There'll be more than enough to satisfy both of us, and with plenty left over for your take home box.

INSALADA - DELIZIOSO!

Your salad will equally big and served with olive oil and vinegar, just as in Italy. There'll be lots of fresh lettuce, bell pepper, red onion, bits of red cabbage, croutons, and olives. Plus all the grated Parmesan cheese you want on top. By this time, you'll wonder if you can handle the main course. But, of course, that's as it should be in an Italian restaurant.

DOLCI – FANTASTICO!

By the way, let's not forget dessert. I guarantee, if you think you're full after dinner, one look at the dessert cart will convince you otherwise. You want canoli or a slice of Italian cheese cake? Maybe some Tiramisu? Or Amaretto Chocolate Mousse cake? Believe me, there'll be something to entice you to fill that little bit of space you reserved for dessert.

A PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION

I tell you, my wife swears by the place. She should know. Two of her sisters were born in Italy, and Italian was her only language until she entered grade school. Her Mama taught her to cook the Italian way with olive oil and fresh vegetables, with those aromatic Italian spices and condiments, and with cheeses. If she says it's real Italian, it's real Italian.

The Golden Spoon agrees. Valenzo's got five Spoons, the highest rating there is, just three months ago.

So, are you hungry? Are you ready for a real Italian dining experience?

Thought so. I'll pick you up at 7.

BUON APPETITO!

Richard

P.S. Almost forgot. Pete has a special going. He said to tell you that dessert's on him tonight. And it'll be on him the next time you come in too, if you bring this letter. 'Course, he can't hold the offer open forever. Show up anytime before July 30th, and there's a free dessert for you – and your wife – and your kids – and for whoever else you bring along.