

localflavour

IL PESCATORE RISTORANTE

■ A charming Port Credit location and a passion for food make Il Pescatore a culinary delight.

by **Janice Ford Spencer**

photography by Karen Newman



In a charming venue located in the equally delightful Village of Port Credit lies a gastronomical gem. As diminutive as it is in size, it's enormous in ambiance. It is a breath of fresh air, it's Il Pescatore.

What sets this unique Italian restaurant apart from others is the affiliation between owners, Davide Gutta and Roy Lougheed. They are the heart and the soul of their creation that was once their dream.

Friends since high school, Chef Davide Gutta and Manager Roy Lougheed, lived and breathed the restaurant business. At the tender age of 16, the buddies made a commitment to work and study together from that point on. When ready, they would combine talents and open up their own restaurant. It was June 1, 2006, and by sheer fortitude the doors were opened to their new restaurant in the community they grew up in. »

Chef Davide Gutta and Manager Roy Lougheed.

Chef's Tasting Menu Platter

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» Upscale dining with a high-end address and décor to match, Gutta and Lougheed want to keep it real. Experiencing success at an early stage, they are content to grow slowly and evolve. Says Gutta, “We care so much. I will say ‘a potato is a potato, but we have to make it better than the next guy.’” Sharing a different approach than most restaurateurs, “We aren’t in a big rush. We know to reach our goal is to maintain our vision. Our biggest asset is we understand we’re students in this business.”

Fortunate for this writer, I had the pleasure of the dining experience offered by Il Pescatore. Though spoiled by a selected sampling of the ever-changing menu, it is how Gutta and Lougheed love to work. A non-believer in precision recipes, it is their intent to interact with customers, ask about their likes and dislikes and then go into the kitchen and make it. Excited by customizing dishes, says Gutta, “I love tailoring to individual tastes and flying with it. I’m not bound by ‘a la carte’ menus and recipes.”

Il Pescatore’s culinary dream team has created dishes versatile in selection and ingredients. Nestled comfortably, I am embraced by the warmth of rich woods, subtle lighting, and happy customers. Server Mattia is charming and as a good young Italian man should, treats me as if I was the only one in the room. I am pleasantly advised that quality vintage appropriate wines will be served, designed to compliment each course. Beginning with Malpeque Bay Oyster on the shell, I enter seafood heaven. Followed by a ‘to-die-for’ Whole Red Snapper, the presentation was as delicious as the fish. Chef Gutta rarely cooks fish in sauce, as the seasoning and specialized oil emphasize the natural flavours and display the freshness of the individual fish. Il Pescatore, through name only, indicates a seafood restaurant. But the sky is the limit, as this writer realized, when sampling their pasta and meat selections. I can only say of the Braised Rabbit and Sweet Potato Gnocchetti, that it’s a creation of sheer genius. Quickly becoming a signature dish, with due cause, it was upon the serving of AAA Angus Beef Striploin adorned by quail egg that I recognized this was a chef who challenges himself daily.

As my evening comes to an end I interact with the regulars and customers in no hurry to call it a night. Chef Gutta appears to say hello to his guests and we all banter while enjoying Andrea Bocelli and Fig & Vin Cotto Custard amid fresh berries.

Combine Lougheed’s vision and management aptitude with Gutta’s culinary skills, and the result is a restaurant as exceptional as their friendship. Passionate in running a smooth ship, the proprietors are present around the clock.

“We are in no rush. We are young men and this is what we love to do. At closing, Davide and I will sit and have a Grappa. If we should not discuss anything, and just say ‘Cheers’... we know it had been a good night.”

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Sweet Potato Gnocchetti with Braised Rabbit

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