

A Taste of Long Island



Vincenzo's

2765 Sunrise Highway, Islip Terrace

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www.vincenzosofislip.com



Because it's a fairly new restaurant, I didn't know what to expect when I visited Vincenzo's. The Island's full of Italian eateries and most are generic. So I was more than pleasantly surprised by my dinner here, where the food was robust, full of flavor and just plain terrific. It's an interesting setup — there's lots of room, providing a cheery, spacious, not-rushed atmosphere. The main dining room is comfortably large, modern with oil paintings adorning the walls. There's a separate barroom, with an imposing 36-foot bar, which is also an OTB outlet, so you can bet on the ponies. An adjoining pizzeria serves up first-rate pies, with sesame crusts that many insist are the best in town.

The Chicken Scarpariello was served in cutlet form, served in a succulent herbal garlic sauce with the traditional roasted potatoes and sausage slices. It was light and well received — a hit. The Lasagna was a just-like-mama-makes dish, rich and thick with sweet sausage, chopped meat and ricotta, with a tasty tomato sauce. I loved the way it was baked, with some burnt, crispy edges. To me, that's the real deal. The savory Steak Pizzaiolo was show-stopping. Again, smothered is the word to describe the absolutely delicious brown sauce, perfectly seasoned and cooked with peppers. It's topped with mozzarella cheese and peppers and was just outstanding.

Chicken Parmigiana, popular as it is, doesn't often reach great heights. But at Vincenzo's it does. And it makes you realize how often you settle when ordering it elsewhere. First, it just looked so appetizing with its glistening melted mozzarella. The chicken was perfectly thick and delectable, juicy and baked in a rich tomato sauce. It's not usually a dish to rave about, but it is one here. The pasta was also first-rate — and so much of it! The Rigatoni with Vodka Sauce and pancetta was subtle and sweet, and the Linguine in Marinara Sauce was one of my favorites of the dinner. The sauce's garlicky mash of tomatoes was supreme.

The dessert choices are overwhelming. It's not only one of the largest selections of desserts I've encountered, they were all mouth-wateringly tempting from the Apple Crisp to the various parfaits and wide selection of pastries and pies. But how could I resist the Tri-Color Cake, a monster version of those fabulously addictive green, red and yellow almond-infused rectangles?

Vincenzo's has many specials including an Express lunch menu, Monday through Wednesday pasta nights, and pizza specials. But right now what I am thrilled about is that they cater parties. My family's next affair will definitely be catered by Vincenzo's, even though they are far from my home. They are that good.

— **By Rob Donovan**