



At Naples Tomato, you can dine - and wine yourself

By: Sandra Silva
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Easily one of the most exciting Italian restaurant in town, Naples Tomato is now also one of the best venues for wine lovers.

If the cozy ambience and the supreme quality food was not enough, Naples Tomato has just inaugurated a wine lounge that offers Enomatic automated wine dispensers; the first ones in Southwest Florida. In an uncomplicated, yet refined, atmosphere, the restaurant floor is divided into three practical zones: a spacious dining area, the brand-new wine lounge and a marketplace for those who want to carry the magic home. The owners, husband-and-wife team Jack and Nadine Serfass, opened the restaurant 18 months ago. They gave it the personal creative touch from the beginning. Nadine envisaged and delivered faux painted walls, romantic hanging lamps, and a casual European feel. Jack conceptualized and perfected recipes. Now, with their dream a reality, they walk through the restaurant, attentive to their customers' needs. They are not the only ones, though. The family team is completed by Pasta Chef Matthew and Dining Room Manager Mike, Jack's younger twin brothers.

In charge of the kitchen, **Head Chef Sebastian Mazzotta** offers more than 10 years experience in the culinary arts; something that becomes evident when tasting the menu items. It seems difficult to pick a favorite dish; if one asks around, the answers are varied, but perhaps equally passionate. "I love 'The Bomb'," said Kelly Billings. "It's just wonderful. Our 10-year-old daughter insists this is the best restaurant ever and it's all because of the macaroni and cheese." The Bomb is in fact a great option, as well as the most expensive one. Black truffle ravioli with Urbani white truffle sauce for a price of \$39.95. Both smooth taste and high price are understandable: truffles are imported from Italy and France.

The "Black Tie" is another fine option, hence its name. Truffle mélange raviolini with the house Bolognese sauce and some secret herbal ingredient, perhaps sage, that leaves a pleasant aftertaste. The price, \$19.95. Another item, already reviewed by The New York Times as "the best," is the 'Classic Lasagna,' with more than 20 secret ingredients, cooked for hours and served between 150 and 170 degrees. For \$18.95, you can taste juicy chunks of mozzarella, soft home-made pasta and a Bolognese sauce to die for.

"We drain all the fat from the meat in our Bolognese sauce and we only use the best products," explained Jack. "That is the difference from a chain restaurant; we are concerned about quality and health. We see our customers face to face; we could not be shaking their hands knowing we are not offering them only the best." And the best is what they offer.

Naples Tomato also offers a wide variety (as opposed to just one dish) of vegetarian pastas and appetizers. Seafood lovers will also like it in here, because the restaurant uses 100 percent lump meat and no fillers. For the icing on the cake, or rather the cake on the pasta, the home-made Oreo Original Cheesecake could not be softer on the palate.

"We prepare everything from scratch, including our desserts, bread and pastas," explained Jack. In fact, they have a pasta-making machine imported from Italy, where they make enough for the restaurant and also for customers to purchase from the marketplace at the entrance.