

RESTAURANT REVIEW 27 Massa's Town and Country February 18, 2015

RESTAURANT REVIEW: We try out the new Town and Country Massa's. It was three for diner and just myself for lunch at Massa's newst location at 14312 S. Outer 40 Drive in Town and Country. I especailly choose two people for dinner. Musician Joe Bayer joined us on his way down to Sasha's to lay down some saxophone jazz on a Wednesday. Joe has spent some time living on the East Coast and is in the LA and Vegas areas on a regular basis in connection with his everyday job. For a guy whose name doesn't end in a vowel, Joe is a bit of an Italian food snob.

Also with us was my wife who lived a year in Rome...who better to rate some Italian food?



The first thing about entering Massa's is that you no longer smell stale cigarette smoke. The prior restaurant at the location, Morgan Le Fay (named after the Welsh fictional emeny of King Arthur) allowed smoking and when the County wide anti-smoking law went into effect Morgan Le Fay reduced its menu so it was no longer considered a restaurant and avoided the smoking ban. The manager was a chain smoker. Of course Town and County's elected officials did nothing like pass a Kirkwood or Clayton style anti-smoking ordiance that covered every place in town. With Mayor Jon Dalton having been a long time cigarette lobbyist that was not going to happen.

I asked about this and was told by a manager that they literally had to rip everything out of the place to get rid of the smell of cigarette smoke.



For a Wednesday night dinner at 7:15 it took our waitress 19 minutes to find time to drop by and say hello. However, things improved after our orders were taken.

Joe likes ravioli and doesn't care for toasted ravioli and complains that at some St. Louis restaurants the only ravioli on the menu is the toasted variety.

He was in luck on this night, both specimens of ravioli were on the menu. He went with a dinner salad and the ravioli (\$8.99). The dinner salad was okay for coming off a modest priced menu. The lettuce was fresh and he wasn't cheated on dressing.



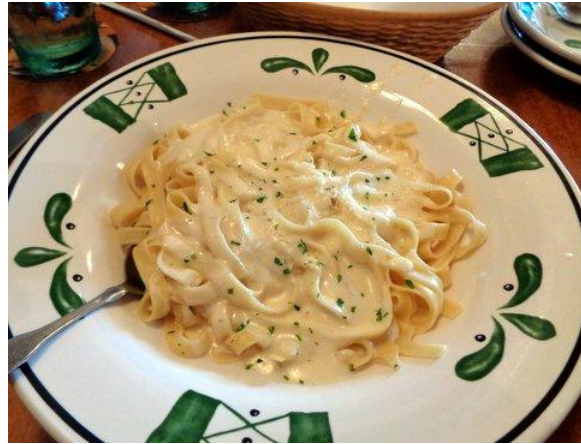
Here is Joe's take on his dinner:

"The ravioli was better than most. The heavy St. Louis red sauce is way behind the lighter East Coast marinaras, but Massa's is worth a visit," he said.

Regular readers of these reviews know that when I'm at an Italian restaurant we always have the "Olive Garden Test." I order fettucine alfredo (\$8.99) and if it is at least as good as Olive Garden's alfredo it passes. Massa's alfredo was every bit as good as that served at the Olive Garden.



Massa's



Olive Garden

Of course the entire time I was enjoying the alfredo my wife was asking me if I knew how many calories it was and if I had a cardiologist on speed dial.

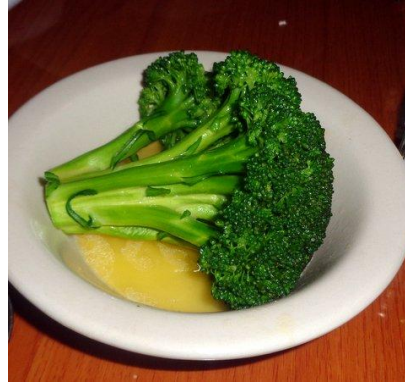
I also ordered chicken tenders (\$7.99) to share . These were good. Not as good as the hand breaded ones at Smitty's, but still unique and tasty.



I also decided to try another side, the Italian Potatoes (\$2.99) . We were going to share these, but it was not worth it. They small potatoes in a cream sauce arrived COLD and at least when they are cold they had very little taste.

Now for the diner who lived in Rome for a year...she ordered Bristo beef Medallions (2 for \$12.99 and 3 for \$16.99) plus broccoli! Go figure.

The two small tenderloins were very tender. However my wife complained that they had no taste. She was right. Concerning the broccoli, she was not happy it was drenched in butter. To me that is one of the few ways to make broccoli edible, the other is to cover it hot melted cheese. My wife is beginning to act like she wants to live to be 70!



Two days later I returned to Massa's just after the lunch rush to try some mid-day food. Since we have tried French dips or roast beef sandwiches at three other Town and Country restaurants (Mike Duffy's, Rich and Charlie's and the Country Club, plus Winfield's in Kirkwood) I gave the Massa French dip (\$8.99) a try. I also went with a side of onion rings.

The French Dip was great. It was far better than what was served at the four other restaurants. If we had one complaint it would be the container of au jus for dipping was too small.



The onion rings however were not special. Go to Charlotte's Rib, Cheeburger Cheeburger or Winfield's for Onion rings and take a pass on them at Massa's. I will say this, with half of the rings still on my plate, the waitress (an assistant manager) asked how they were and I replied that I was not crazy about them and she took them off the bill.

The fact is that unlike Rich and Charlie's, there is plenty of room at Massa's. You can talk like an Italian with your hands and not worry about hitting someone at the next table. Also the prices are more reasonable, portions more reasonable and the food seems to be better. Also unlike Rich and Charlie's you can order a pizza while someone else at your table can get pasta or a sandwich. At Rich and Charlie's the pizza is two doors down in a separate store front.

I plan to go back and try the St. Louis style pizza at Massa's. We found Massa's menu to be hit and miss. However if you find something you like it might be the perfect place in town for an informal and reasonably priced meal.