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DINING OUT

Wholesome Fare in White Plains

By M. H. REED

HOMEY food and lots of it is a familiar story at Michelangelo, now in its 13th year. At the helm since last March, new management has wisely chosen to intensify rather than to change the robust style of this lively restaurant. The place hums with cheery bustle from swift-footed dining room staff and from dating couples, sedate business people and entire families, all there to enjoy wholesome preparations in quantities that guarantee getting one's money's worth.

Recovering successfully from a brief lapse, the kitchen is again in admirable form, turning out carefully cooked, lightly rendered dishes from a menu that takes into consideration today's preference for noncreamy sauces by working delicious wonders with herbs, garlic and tomato.

Try to avoid filling up on warm nuggets of fried pizza bread — spicy, oily and delicious. If a first course is in order, choose among appetizers such as fresh clams Luciana in a garlicky broth, four splendid splayed shrimp oreganata or a house salad drizzled with excellent warmed oil. Soup, however, has tested better in the past, mushy vegetables and too much salt spoiling a recent sampling of minestrone.

Half orders of Michelangelo's perfectly cooked, satisfying pasta dishes deserved serious consideration as well. Fresh jalapeño peppers and fresh tomatoes mingled with firm ziti in a racy ziti arabiata. A knowing hand produced spaghetti puttanesca, one of our favorite dishes, smacking of capers and chopped black olives. Although other pasta dishes proved better than merely acceptable, they lacked some of the spark of the best. The sauce and flavor of linguine al filetto was a rife thin, the gnocchi a tad heavy, and the juicy tortelli-

Michelangelo's

★★

208 Underhill Avenue, Silver Lake, White Plains. 428-0022.

Atmosphere: Dark beams define the pale stucco walls of this unpretentious dining room and ample bar and lounge. Hanging plants and bright flowers soften the edges. Some tables are too small to accommodate four diners. A clean-air ventilator efficiently removes smoke from the room; however, on one occasion we had to remind the waiter to turn it on.

Service: Expert and friendly to forgetful and aloof.

Recommended dishes: House salad, clams Luciana, ziti arabiata, spaghetti puttanesca, veal chop contadina, fillet of pork cognac, veal Michelangelo, veal cutlet parmigiana, veal scaloppine with mushrooms and peppers, eggplant rollatine, chicken cacciatore, swordfish Livornese, calamari fra Diavolo, shrimp fra diavolo, cannoli, cappuccino.

Prices: Lunch, à la carte, with main dishes from \$5 to \$10. Dinner, à la carte, with main dishes from \$8.25 to \$16. \$20 for zuppa di pesce and \$22 for surf and turf. Pasta dishes are \$7 to \$10, and the kitchen will prepare half orders for appetizer.

Credit cards: All major credit cards accepted.

Hours: Lunch, Monday through Friday, 11:30 A.M. to 3 P.M. Dinner, Monday through Thursday, 4 to 10 P.M.; Friday and Saturday, 4 to 11 P.M.; Sunday, 3 to 9 P.M.

Reservations: Taken for parties of eight or more.

What the stars mean:

- (None) Poor to satisfactory
- ★ Good
- ★★ Very good
- ★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★ Extraordinary

These ratings are based on the reviewer's reaction to food and price in relation to comparable establishments.

Entrees, so often the weak point of restaurant kitchens, held their own beautifully here. Tender pork cutlets with a cream and cognac sauce; veal contadina, the double thick chop buried beneath a hill of onions, peppers, potatoes and mushrooms; deliciously simple veal Parmigiana; featherweight eggplant rollatine; shrimp fra diavolo, best when we remarked that we appreciate heat; smothered in tomatoes and olives, swordfish Livornese; and chicken cacciatore and the lemony scarpariello — all dished out in double portion. Tough tripe Romana missed, needing only longer cooking.

Not a bit of graininess marred the moderately sweet filling of a crisp cannoli, one of the best anywhere and the best dessert here. Fragrant coffee and cappuccino can be had in decent decaffeinated versions.

Generally efficient service can be forgetful. On one occasion the basket of bread arrived with our first course; on another evening we had to ask several times before the wine list was brought.

A three-course dinner for two, including an appetizer, soup or half portion of pasta, an entree (be prepared to take much of it home) and dessert, with a moderately priced bottle of wine averages \$48 without tax and tip.

lini clobbered with an overly intense Bolognese sauce.