

# taste

## Exurban renewal

### Silver Spoon

BY EVAN HANSEN

**FINDING A GREAT RESTAURANT** in northern Macomb County can be a challenge. In the case of the superb Italian eatery Silver Spoon, that's quite literally true: Tucked in a corner recess of the large Papa Joe's shopping plaza at Rochester and Tienken, its modest, elegant entryway lined with herbs and flowers is engulfed by the field of brightly lit signs for neighboring businesses.

That somehow seems fitting, though, given how quickly the frenetic strip mall setting becomes a distant memory upon passing through the front door. It's a classic white-linen operation complete with tableside service for select dishes — but whether it's due to the light-colored walls, contemporary accents, or management gleefully working the room, the atmosphere doesn't feel overly formal or stiff.

Like most Italian restaurants, Silver Spoon's culinary influences span the entire country, and the long, diverse menu reflects that approach.

We opted on our first visit to start with the *carpaccio di polpo* (\$13), a platter of octopus adorned with parsley, lemon and olive oil. Per traditional preparation, the octopus is packed and pressed into a tight roll then sliced paper-thin to tender, lively perfection. There are another eight or so cold appetizers as well, including grilled vegetables, beef and smoked salmon carpaccio, a Caprese plate, and an array of cheeses and meats. While there are arguably better charcuterie platters in the metro area, the meats are shaved perfectly thin, and at \$11 for a shareable platter, it's a worthwhile way to begin a meal.

Everyone enjoyed the grilled polenta (\$6) and *fritto misto* (\$11), but it was the mussels and clams (\$12) in a tomato broth that were most discussed at our table. The mussels were nicely prepared, and we all found ourselves reaching into the bread basket to sponge up the delicious broth.

Silver Spoon puts an admirable focus on good execution with simple ingredients, a notion on clear display with its salads. You won't see thick, creamy dressings mounded on a plate here. Rather each of the salads (\$7-9) is dressed with olive oil and either a vinegar or fresh

lemon juice. Simple, delicious — and all too uncommon.

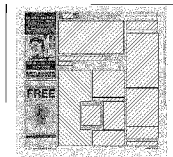
An entire page of the menu is devoted to pastas. Their fresh tomato sauce is a delicious, vibrant addition to several of the dishes, like the *tagliatelle rustiche* (\$20), a thin, freshly made noodle with shrimp, artichoke and asparagus. And while we were tempted by fettucine with sausage, leek and fresh tomato concassé (\$16) and linguine with clams (\$22), we ultimately settled on the gnocchi (\$17), served in a shallow bowl with a creamy, rich cheese sauce. With a perfectly smooth melt-in-your-mouth texture, they were a hit with everyone at the table. And it just so happens the portion size is just right not only as an individual plate but also to be served as a shared appetizer or modest shared pasta course between starters and mains.

Silver Spoon's meat and fish entrées are quite reasonably priced and unsurprisingly every bit as well-prepared as the rest of the menu. Dyed-in-the-wool carnivores might initially salivate over the ostensibly simple preparations: filet mignon (\$26), the sirloin steak gently treated with garlic (\$24) or herb-encrusted lamb chops with balsamic reduction (market price). But don't overlook the several veal dishes; they're outstanding.

Simple but delicious is a paillard of veal served over a bed of arugula (\$22). They also serve veal scaloppini with prosciutto and sage (\$20) as well as with a lemon sauce (\$19). But my favorite has to be the *braciola di vitello* (\$21), a most enjoyable veal tenderloin rolled around pancetta, parsley, garlic and Romano cheese accompanied by a fresh, balanced tomato sauce.

There are a number of fish dishes to choose from as well, including salmon, sole and the firm but delicate Mediterranean sea bass, *branzino* (\$30), which is grilled and boned at a tableside cart.

Desserts were not to our party's minds as impressive as the previous offerings. While the flavors in our lemon tart and coffee-infused crème brûlée were fine, the textures of each were a bit lackluster. The custard in particu-



lar apparently loses some of its characteristic creaminess with the addition of the espresso.

More impressive is the wine list: Many restaurants in the exurbs seem to have trouble stocking their cellars with all but the most pedestrian of bottles. And while Silver Spoon doesn't have anything particularly adventurous, it boasts a list of established Italian brands like Vietti, Gaja and Illuminati, as well as some charming whites, mostly at very competitive prices.

Service is friendly and exceedingly helpful. Parties sharing their appetizers, for example, can expect an offer to apportion each of the dishes from one of the tableside carts. And servers are prompt while allowing plenty of time and space for diners to enjoy leisurely dinner conversation.

Silver Spoon presents itself as a moderately upscale Italian restaurant, and that's exactly what it is. You'll know it the moment you

enter. While other fairly traditional white-linen restaurants have opened in the past year or so with much greater fanfare — and though Silver Spoon doesn't offer anything surprising — there's an unquestionable quality to their food and a refreshing honesty in their approach.



Evan Hansen dines for *Metro Times*. Send comments to [letters@metrotimes.com](mailto:letters@metrotimes.com).

**6830 N. Rochester Rd.,  
 Rochester Hills  
 248-652-4500**

**[silverspoonristorante.com](http://silverspoonristorante.com)**

Handicap accessible

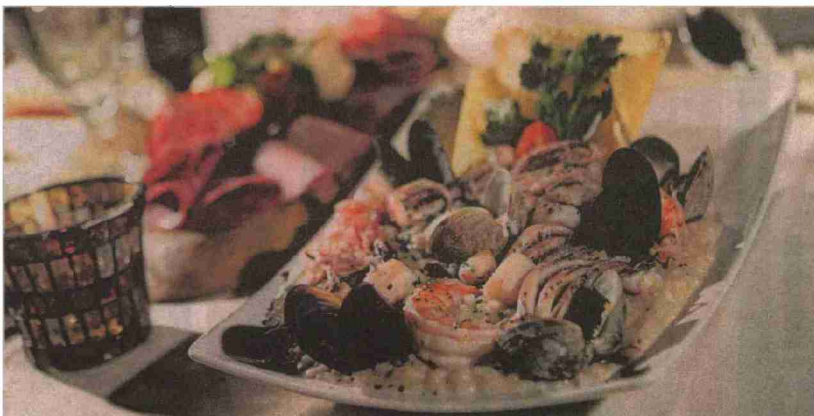
Prices: \$20-\$50

4:30-10 p.m. Tuesday-

Thursday, 4:30-11 p.m.

Friday-Saturday, 4:30-9

p.m. Sundays



☞ Risotto ai frutti di mare with calamari, mussels, clams and shrimp, front, and antipasto della casa with prosciutto, capicollo, salami, mortadella and Italian cheese, back, from Silver Spoon in Rochester Hills.

Printing imperfections present during scanning.