



Bettolino Kitchen – Modern Italian Cuisine

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The term “Michelin star” is a hallmark of quality for fine dining in restaurants around the world. Last year’s movie release of “The Hundred-Foot Journey” portrayed the lengths French restaurateurs take to acquire this highly coveted status.

The South Bay is extremely fortunate to have a restaurant with an executive chef that has earned a coveted Michelin star as only a handful of restaurants in LA have been bestowed this award. Fabio Ugoletti earned the prestigious award at Al Gallopapa in Castellina Chianti, Italy.

Bettolino Kitchen recently opened in Redondo Beach is owned and operated by the brother and sister team of Vince Gaetano and Andreanna Liguore. They are veterans of the South Bay restaurant scene, owning the popular Gaetano’s restaurant in South Torrance. My review of Gaetano’s restaurant is [here](#).

How Bettolino Kitchen came into existence is an interesting story. Vince Gaetano decided that he wanted to hone his culinary knowledge and temporarily moved to Italy to enroll in cooking school. While he resided in Italy, he became good friends with his teacher, chef Fabio Ugoletti.



Even after Vince graduated cooking school, he maintained his friendship with Fabio. Consulting engagements led Fabio to Gaetano's and through his visits they jointly decided to open a new restaurant. Fabio took the bold change by moving his young family from Florence Italy to the South Bay.

Andreanna Liguore provided the consulting for the interior design. Natural light brightens up the interior and gives the restaurant a casual feel. The abundance of distressed wood effectively offsets an otherwise stark interior. Chef Ugoletti and his team are available to watch in action as diners can view the kitchen from their seats.



Individuals avoiding alcoholic beverages will appreciate that Bettolino Kitchen has a line of signature soft drinks. The Pear and Ginger is quite refreshing and makes for a great way to cleanse your palate between courses. It is topped with fresh diced pears. Their other soft drinks include Blackberry Basil, Cucumber Mint and Mixed Berry Lemonade.



Farro is appearing on more menus these days, but has been a long-time Italian staple. It is a healthy whole grain known for its nutty flavor and delicate chewy nature. Diced cucumbers, bell peppers and tomatoes were combined with farro and served on a plate with arugula tossed with balsamic vinaigrette. I really enjoyed this dish because it was both chewy and crunchy and the balsamic dressing nicely offset the arugula.



One of Bettolino Kitchen's appetizers is an attractively laid out dish of hand rolled meatballs. The spicy tomato sauce with the thin crispy crostini gave the dish a nice balance.



Calamari e Cavoletti – Calamari and brussels sprouts doesn't sound all that appealing, but when you present it in Italian, it sounds intriguing. The polenta was amazingly soft and not dense whatsoever. Diced brussels sprouts, pancetta and calamari were layered on top of the polenta. A sweet white garlic sauce was drizzled over the entire dish. The end result was extremely satisfying.



Gnocchi is not one of my favorite dishes as it is too dense for my liking. Bettolino Kitchen's wasn't like that at all as each dumpling was soft, velvety and pillowy in nature. They were stuffed with chicken, pancetta and sausage. The dish was topped with shaved pecorino Toscano.



Pasta is handmade in-house and it was evident eating their Cinque Strati or simply “5 layers”. This was a unique “lasagna” consisting of wild boar ragu with a hint of cocoa powder, porcini mushrooms, fresh herbs, parmesan sauce and topped with fresh arugula.



Capesante was full of color as the prosciutto wrapped scallops were surrounded with mashed butternut squash and topped with sauteed asparagus tips. This dish was cooked to perfection and flavorful as well.



While Vince resided in Italy, he discovered guancia or braised veal cheek. Veal cheek is braised for 6 hours and served with a red wine reduction, potato celery root puree and sautéed asparagus tips. The result in the braising yielded extremely tender veal cheeks and combined with the red wine reduction, this dish was an unexpected surprise.



The Whipped Mascarpone is meant to be shared. It includes meringue cream, fresh strawberries and dark cocoa sauce.



The Ricotta & Almond Cheesecake has a delicious almond biscotti crust.



Chocolate Mousse is topped with fresh strawberries, slivered almonds, evoo and salt flakes.



My decaf coffee was served in an Italian coffee press. This was the ultimate in classy coffee experiences!

While I didn't mention wine, Bettolino Kitchen offers a nice selection of domestic and Italian wines. South Bay local beers on tap include Smog City and Strand Brewing Company.

I'm grateful that Vince and Andreanna took the bold leap to open a modern Italian kitchen in the South Bay. I no longer have to leave the South Bay to satisfy my urge for cutting edge Italian cuisine.

* Items mentioned in this article were provided on a complimentary basis for the purpose of this review. This story was accurate when it was published and reflects the uninfluenced opinion of the reviewer.

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