

# Nouvelle Italian by the Sea

Old world charm and chic, hip elegance are combined to bring the earthly wonders of the brick oven and superb creations of Chef Luois Allaico to fruition for your dining pleasure in Long Beach.

Caffe Laguna's atmosphere is warm and cozy, perfect for a romantic adventure or a gathering of good friends who enjoy the best of northern and southern Italian cuisines with just the allowed creative improvisation to improve upon traditional fare.

A basket of fresh Italian bread arrived with a choice of red peppered spicy olive or plain oil and a small tureen of assorted marinated black and green olives and mushrooms to whet our appetite.

Among their many salad offerings are the traditional tre colore, the Caesar and their house, with hearts of boston lettuce with sundried tomato, goat cheese and roasted pine nuts in their house dressing. I opted for the "insalata del giorno" featured on the special menu, with fresh spinach, mushrooms and cherry tomatoes topped with roasted garlic and bits of ba-

con in a light balsamic dressing, whose fresh roasted garlic took the traditional spinach salad to another level.

Our waiter, Greg, suggested the grilled sea scallops with endive, mandarin oranges, chopped tomatoes in a lemon, garlic white wine and "fresh herb" secret sauce for an appetizer. It is a delicate and unique combination of aromatic flavors that was absolutely delicious.

The special menu the night I visited, featured exotic and traditional pastas including Risotto alla Anatria with pieces of duck and red onions in a porcini mushroom sauce in a porcini mushroom sauce and Linguini Pescatore, an assortment of mussels, clams, shrimp and pieces of fresh St. Peters fish served over a bed of linguini in a light tomato seafood sauce and meat entrees including Gallieto Saporito, a whole oven roasted free range chicken topped with sundried tomatoes and artichoke hearts in a garlic white wine sauce served with mashed potatoes and sautéed spinach or the Vitello Piccata, tender veal scalloppine served with capers

and fresh tomatoes in a garlic white wine sauce served with roasted potatoes and sautéed spinach.

I ordered the Tonno ala Griglia from the regular menu, a fresh seared yellowfin tuna in an orange-lime glaze with slices of lime and lemon wedges over broccoli rabe and served with roasted potatoes. It was flavorful, cooked expertly and had just the right amount of citrus. I sampled the Chilean sea bass that my friend ordered which was layered with portabello mushrooms in a lemon white wine sauce topped with fried leeks, which has, according to the menu, been noted in the NYTimes, and arrived on a bed of radicchio, with a wedge of corn on the cob, cauliflower, carrots and roasted potatoes seasoned with rosemary. It is a light dish, perfect for the upcoming summer evenings.

For a round of desserts, we were graciously served a taste of some of the offerings. The white chocolate mousse, chocolate passion pastry with drizzled melted chocolate, a puff pastry garnished with raspberry and kiwi sauce, key lime

## Caffe Laguna

Open for dinner seven nights from 5-? Appetizers from \$7-\$11 Entrees from \$16-\$28 960 West Beech St., Long Beach, New York Reservations 516-432-2717

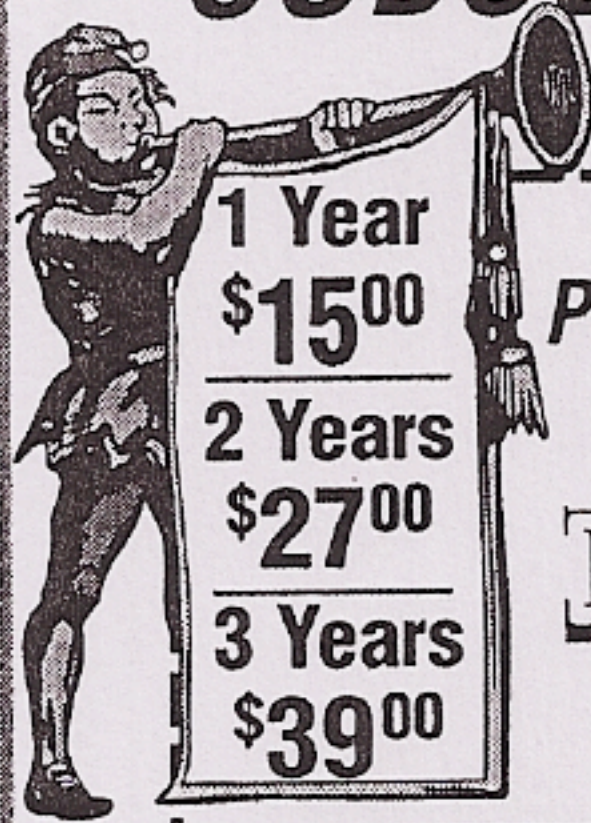
pie and chocolate tiramisu. All were too fattening to eat more than a bite, but for those of you with fast metabolisms, don't worry and enjoy. The white chocolate mousse was light and rich, the chocolate passion pastry drizzled with melted chocolate was too sweet for me as was the puff pastry garnished with raspberry and kiwi sauce, but the key lime pie was divine as was the chocolate tiramisu.

Woody Dolan and Thomas Corning, the gracious hosts, have owned and operated Caffe Laguna for the last 3 years. They are currently opening a new Italian restaurant, Olive Oils, fashioned after Vincents in Westbury in Point Lookout just in time for the summer season, which will bring more delicious Italian specialties to your palate.

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