



A Culinary Vision That Soars

Italian creations atop the Palms

BY E.C. GLADSTONE
Photos by Jeffrey Green

First impressions can sometimes deceive. For a restaurant that shares elevators with Moon and the Playboy Club at Palms, you'd expect to find lots of beautiful people (check), a high-energy environment (check) and probably "just OK, but who's noticing" food. That's where Nove Italiano will surprise you. The kitchen of chef Geno Bernardo produces some of the absolutely finest Italian food in Las Vegas—and not for lack of competition!

Mixing traditional East Coast influences with contemporary Italian modernism, Nove's dishes all have familiar names—calamari, carbonara, caprese, crudo—but the details, and the pleasing presentations, show you that this food deserves its lofty 51st floor stage.

A tuna-based seafood crudo and calamari both reflect the quality of their ingredients in simple servings, while the "Crostateci" raw bar is impressively thorough with clams, mussels and squid alongside lobster, crab, shrimp and oysters.



Ricotta-prosciutto tortellini



Seafood crudo

Nove Italiano /Palms Resort

Opens 5:30 p.m. daily
Lounge open 5 p.m. daily
702.942.6800



Caprese salad

Pastas are nicely varied here, some house-made, others premium imports from the motherland. The signature Nove spaghetti is a mélange of garlicky, buttery lobster, scallops, crab, calamari and shrimp atop white and squid-ink-black noodles. Trust your servers when they say it's a must.

The scallop risotto with peas, mushrooms and Parmesan I enjoyed (risottos change per "chef's whim") was savory, soft and buttery, a relief from so many unsatisfying versions elsewhere. And Bernardo's gnocchi? Supple on the outside, soufflé-soft inside, the perfect expression of this potato-based pasta. There is ravioli carbonara, short-rib agnolotti, ricotta-prosciutto tortellini and even Sunday gravy here, too—I'd recommend ordering half portions to try a few.

For *secondi*, pray they are serving the whole branzino, seasoned and grilled until the crispy skin peels away, with three flavored sea salts to augment. The lamb chops are also fine, double cut, wood-grilled and presented on a chickpea, eggplant and pepper ragu that you'll quickly clean up.

Granted, you may have a hard time focusing on the menu: Nove's main room is a crazy collision of mod and traditional, with Swarovski chandeliers, shifting digital displays of Renaissance art and zebra print chairs competing with breathtaking Vegas views. Snag a coveted balcony table for a tête-à-tête or the patio room for a private gathering.