

# TAVERNA GRILL

*A Tale of 2 Andreas*

By Kim Burns & Sandra Halliday

Taverna Grill is owned and operated by two chefs; Andrea Joly and Andrea Baroni. At an early age they developed their deep love for food while cooking. The sweet aroma and sounds from *nonna's cucina* inspired them to venture into the culinary world. The love for travel brought them to hone their skills in many famous kitchens around the world leading to a delicious culinary partnership.

Upon entering we were warmly greeted by the soothing strains of New Age music lulling us with its tranquil sounds. Wanting to start the Italian meal off right, an aperitif chosen to get the juices flowing for improved digestion. Our server and mixologist, Terrill, set to work immediately concocting his magic naming the playful creations after us. *Kim's Campari* was light mix of vodka, Taverna Syrup, and Campari garnished with lime and orange wedges. *Sandra's Singapore Sling à la Sarasota* was made of Gin infused with rose and cucumber, Cointreau, pineapple juice, and club soda. The tastes were a bitter sweet start to our dining experience stimulating our appetites and preparing us for the treats ahead.

Every item on Taverna Grill's selection of Antipasti and Salads sounded delectable. Selecting just a few was no mean feat. The *Asparagus Salad* with finely shaved asparagus set a top a bed of organic greens, goat cheese, and walnuts resembling a fine work of contemporary art. The Lemon Vinaigrette conjured images of the citrus orchards that dot the sunny Italian countryside, as the flavors enveloped our taste buds.

The *Rock Shrimp & Calamari* arrived with sophisticated elegance. Not a piece of breading in sight. Flambé'd with white wine, it was delicately seasoned with garlic and parsley. All of the seafood was succulent to the bite and cooked to perfection, we couldn't ask for better.

One of our Primi Piattis, *Ricotta Cheese Tortellini*, was served with a secret recipe sauce from Chef Baroni's grandmother. The pastas were flavorful and are freshly made daily. Chef Andrea Joly tells us that his gnocchi sauce is an umami blend of blue cheese, Parmesan, Swiss, and Goat cheeses.

The Secondi Piatti was *Oven Baked Thyme-Lemon Marinated Lamb Shank* served with *Mashed Potatoes* and *Vegetables*. Our lamb was fall-off-the-bone



succulent and melted like soft butter in our mouths. The chefs' herbal infusion transformed the musky flavor of lamb into savory perfume as portions of meat tantalized our senses of taste and smell.

Many believe that dessert is the best part of a good meal. We concur, especially when dolci meant palate-cleansing vegan *Coconut Panna Cotta* with *Mango and Passion Fruit Couli*. We heard the sounds of the ocean and tasted the gentle breezes as the cream melted in our mouth. This was a delightful marriage of cooked cream and Caribbean fruit flavors.

Our culinary adventure took us to the hearths of their grandmothers kitchens in Northern Italy, feeling the love and warmth of la famiglia through their joyful cooking. Isn't that what a celebration is all about? Bravissimo!

Monday to Saturday 11am - 9:30pm, Sunday 3pm - 9pm.

**Don't forget to let them know Kim and Sandra sent you!**

Taverna Grill

1920 Hillview Street

Sarasota, FL 34239

(941) 346.6989

[www.TavernaGrillSarasota.com](http://www.TavernaGrillSarasota.com)