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Halligan's Hits & Misses: Taverna Novo a unique treat in the Spa City

By Lauren Halligan lhalligan@digitalfirstmedia.com @LaurenTheRecord on Twitter
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Chef Fabrizio Facchini (right) and co-owner Jeffrey Novo (second from right) look on as guests sample the Taverna Novo cuisine during a special event. **Support local journalism.**

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SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. >> Italy doesn't seem so far away since the opening of Taverna Novo.

This little restaurant, located at 62 Beekman St. in Saratoga Springs, brings a little bit of Italian atmosphere to the neighborhood.

I recently had the opportunity to experience it firsthand during a special event at the restaurant, which opened earlier this month.

While the Spa City has its fair share of Italian restaurants, there isn't one quite like this.

Taverna Novo is a small, intimate setting with about a dozen tables and a bar, as well as a wood fire oven that makes the space all the more cozy and inviting.

From this oven comes an array of different Italian specialties including pizza, meatballs, and porchetta.

About 90 percent of the restaurant's cooked food comes through this oven at some point before it's served, according to Chef Fabrizio Facchini, a native of Le Marche, Italy.

The restaurant is owned and operated by husband and wife entrepreneurial duo Jeffrey and Patricia Novo of Saratoga Springs.

"We just want to bring people good authentic Italian food, with an awesome wine list, that's reasonably priced," Jeffrey said.

Upon visiting Taverna Novo for the first time, Facchini, a seafood-lover, recommends that guests try the grilled octopus, and the lobster and shrimp saffron risotto.

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Jeffrey, a meat-lover, encourages people order the house made meatballs, and the porchetta, which is one of Italy's most celebrated dishes.

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And Patricia - a certified specialist of wine as designated by the Society of Wine Educators and a member of the Guild of Sommeliers - urges visitors to taste their way through the vino list, which features a wide variety of Italian and American wines.

During my own visit I had a chance to try some wine, of course, along with a spread of fabulous antipasti, a couple meatballs, the Cacio e Pepe (a pasta dish with pecorino and cracked pepper), the Coniglio a Frico (a braised rabbit dish with potatoes and greens), the risotto and a slice of the charcoal crust pizza.

Some of these dishes I was already familiar with, and others I was not - but all of it was delicious.

I thought the menu offered a good mix of mainstream Italian foods like pizza, spaghetti and meatballs - all sure to please any picky eater - in addition to some adventurous dishes for diners like myself that are always looking for something new.

I hear that Taverna Novo has had a busy first few weeks - and I can understand why.

I predict that area foodies will be finding their way to Beekman Street's Taverna Novo for many years to come.

More information about Taverna Novo is available online at www.tavernanovo.com or www.facebook.com/tavernanovo.

The restaurant only takes reservations for parties of six or more.

Taverna Novo can be contacted by phone at (518) 886-1680.

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Business and entertainment reporter at The Saratogian since 2013

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