

# cheap eats

By Joan Reminick joan.reminick@newsday.com

## HOW THEY RATE

\$\$ Average meal \$30 and under, pp  
\$ Average meal \$15 and under, pp

★★★★ Exceptional  
★★★ Excellent  
★★ Very good  
★ Good

## Due Pazzi

**FOOD** ★ ★ 1/2  
63 Glen St.  
Glen Cove  
516-609-2625

**COST** \$\$  
**AMBIENCE** Good  
**SERVICE** Good  
**ESSENTIALS**

Dinner only, Tuesday to Sunday; closed Monday. Awaiting liquor license. Fully accessible.

You know you're not at just another spaghetti joint when the first question you're asked is whether you'd like a chocolate soufflé for dessert. Soufflés have to be started early, says co/chef-co/owner Joseph Drapeylo whose partner, Merlin Tlapa, never emerges from the kitchen. Hey, somebody's got to melt the chocolate and whip the egg whites.

### THE SEDUCTION CONTINUES

It's a meal of ongoing surprises. Light, savory little chicken meatballs are lined up in a row like fat lollipops, sticks protruding — so adorable. A clever little oblong pizza has a matzo-crisp crust, a crazy-good topping of roasted cauliflower, Manchego cheese, Parmesan, provolone and pancetta. And how about those ingenious Italian spring rolls, bias-cut phyllo stuffed with sweet sausage, broccoli



Patience is rewarded at Due Pazzi in Glen Cove.

rabe and spicy red pepper flakes? The compelling chopped salad has savory cabbage instead of lettuce; grape tomatoes and bits of roasted corn burst in the mouth.

**WORTH THE WAIT** After a long lull between first and second courses, patience is rewarded with fresh pasta, cooked al dente. Linguine scioglio is rife with scallops, shrimp and mussels. Meltingly tender little gnocchi are tossed with colorful vegeta-

bles. Then, there's a fork-tender Parmesan-crust chicken breast with an eye-opening lemon caper sauce. A special of perfectly roasted whole dorade is stuffed with fresh rosemary and lemon.

**THE DOWNSIDE** Whole-wheat ravioli filled with asiago cheese, asparagus and Parmesan is off-tasting and monochromatically beige. Also, a pasta special with broccoli rabe and chicken comes off as flavorless and dry.

**JUST DESSERTS** Shortfalls are forgotten at soufflé time. It's deeply bittersweet with just the right airy-runny consistency, its warmth offset by a scoop of coffee ice cream. What's more, it's just \$4.95. A patisserie-perfect pear tart and a dream of a lemon curd cheesecake cost the same.

**BOTTOM LINE** Can these two crazy guys ("due pazzi") continue to ply us with this kind of food at such prices? Stay tuned. Make reservations.

## MEATBALLS GALORE

### Cafe Formaggio

**FOOD** ★  
307 Old Country Rd.  
Carle Place  
516-333-1718

**COST** \$\$  
**AMBIENCE** Very good  
**SERVICE** Good

This big, brash trattoria distinguishes itself with its great garlicky meatballs. Sure, you can have them over pasta, but if you're looking for something a little more inventive, try the meatball sliders. The globes are flattened a bit, thinly coated with tomato sauce and sandwiched between two squares of puff pastry. So stylish; so satisfying.

## Mangia Mangia

**FOOD** ★ ★  
69 Main St.  
Patchogue  
631-475-4774

**COST** \$\$  
**AMBIENCE** Very good  
**SERVICE** Good

At this lively downtown Patchogue ristorante, the meatballs are light-textured and deep-flavored, the bright sauce tasting as though someone's nonna had stirred the pot. What makes everything better is that owner Angelo Galeotafiore uses prime organic ingredients whenever possible.

## Spuntino

**FOOD** ★  
687 Old Country Rd.  
Dix Hills  
631-547-9300

**COST** \$\$  
**AMBIENCE** Good  
**SERVICE** Very good

The scent of a wood-fired brick pizza oven adds to the allure of this strip mall spot whose meatballs are tender, knowingly seasoned and made with just the right amount of bread. Try them paired with sausage that's been sliced on the bias and pan-fried over al dente spaghetti in a vibrant pomodoro sauce.

# the foodshop

## Prime Time Butcher

382 Willis Ave.  
Roslyn Heights  
516-625-0032

**THE SPECIALTY**  
**Dry-aged prime beef**

Ever since 1993, when he opened his first shop, Prime Time Butcher in Woodbury, Lou Kreitzman has made prime meat his calling card. He personally selects the beef, veal and lamb that he buys, and dry-ages it on the premises in one of two temperature- and humidity-controlled coolers. Dry-aging improves the flavor and texture of meat and it makes prime beef even more of a treat.

### THE FAMILY

Lou's father and grandfather were in the wholesale meat business. While Lou was studying law at Georgetown, his father, Manny, was diagnosed

with cancer, and Lou left law school to join his father in business. When Lou himself fell ill in 2003 (he has since made a full recovery), his son Josh, then a TV sports producer, left ESPN to join his father.

**BEST BUY**  
**Dry-aged choice beef**

Prime beef accounts for about 3 percent of all beef processed in the United States. It exhibits the highest degree of marbling (flecks of fat running through the meat) and it is also the most expensive — and getting more so every day.

When they opened their second store, in Roslyn Heights, Lou and Josh decided to start dry-aging choice beef, the next highest grade, in order to provide a less expensive dry-aged product for customers who appreciate fine meat, but for whom price is an object. Prime Time sells



Josh Kreitzman, left, and his father, Lou, with some of the dry-aged meat at Prime Time Butcher in Roslyn Heights

the new product for about half the price of prime. Right now, their dry-aged prime is selling for \$32.98 per pound; dry-aged choice is \$15.98. (The Roslyn Heights store is running a special on dry-aged choice shell steaks: \$13.98 per pound.)

### ETC

Prime Time also sells ready-to-cook items (pre-skewered kebabs and marinated meats) and sides, including a knockout Asian cabbage salad.

— ERICA MARCUS

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