

TASTE OF THE TOWN

Eddie's does traditional Italian with high quality and surprises

BOB MIGRA

Special to The Plain Dealer

The way I see it, my job as a restaurant reviewer is threefold:

1. Be your advance scout. That is, tell you the basics, similar to the way you and your friends might compare notes after visiting a new restaurant.

2. Dig a little deeper. In other words, be a critic. Try to reveal some of the little flaws the casual diner might not notice, but that can make a difference.

3. Tell the story of each restaurant, or at least during my visits, in a way that is entertaining enough to keep you reading to the bottom of the page.

Eddie's Pizzeria Cerino made my job more of a challenge than usual. After two visits to the busy new Seven Hills restaurant, I'm having a tough time fulfilling the requirements of Item 2.

I couldn't find anything to criticize.

OK, how about this: We needed more garlic toast with our Pan-Roasted Clams appetizer (\$9.95). After quickly scarfing down the fresh, briny clams and toast points dunked in a zesty, spicy white wine/garlic/red chile broth, we had a sizable puddle of the delicious liquid left over.

But rather than wait to ask our server for more bread, I polished it off like a bowl of soup. Now, you might say that is more of a commentary on my appetite than a criticism of the restaurant. You're starting to see my situation.

It was not the only time we quickly cleaned our plates. My wife, our neighbors and I made short work of an order of Salumi Sliders (\$7.50). Mild, artisan-crafted Italian salumi (salami) was topped with sun-dried tomatoes and a drizzle of fruity olive oil served on mini-buns made of focaccia bread.

A 9-inch Pancetta & Pomodoro pizza (\$10.95) disappeared in a comparably short time. The dough was as good as any I have tried, with a thin but extra-crispy outer crust and a light and airy interior. We tried a 9-inch Wild Mushroom pizza (\$11.95) on our second visit to see if it matched the quality of the first. It did.

Owner Eddie Cerino is the grandson of Carrie Cerino, namesake of the venerable restaurant and party center in North Royalton. He said he learned the secret of the pizza crust — a starter called *poolish* — from a master breadmaker in Minnesota. The dough "brews" for three days, creating a higher sugar content than most.

Tricks that Cerino picked up at the Culinary Institute of America and elsewhere have produced a menu that is traditionally Italian but still surprising.

Take the Baked Ravioli (\$6.25 for a



DOUGH DONE RIGHT: The wild mushroom, left, and pancetta and pomodoro pizza's best feature may be their crispy, light dough.

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half-portion). The surprise is in the sauce: a visually attractive mix of velvety asiago cream sauce and San Marzano marinara. As a bonus, the restaurant provides half portions of most entrees and salads, allowing you to sample more items or just

have a bargain meal. The choice is yours. I didn't find any bad choices.

Bob Migra is a free-lance writer in Westlake. Reach him at food@plaind.com

TASTE BITES

**Eddie's
Pizzeria
Cerino**

Where: 7305 Broadview Road, Seven Hills.

Contact: 216-236-6007.

Online: pizzeriacerino.com

Hours: 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

Prices: Appetizers, \$2.75-\$9.95; salads, \$3.75-\$9.25; pizza, \$7.95-\$19.95; sandwiches, \$7.95-\$9.25; entrees, \$4.25-\$14.95; dessert, \$1.95-\$4.75.

Reservations: Accepted for groups of eight or more.

Credit cards: All major cards.

Cleanliness: Spotless.

Kid friendliness: Several kids meals available for \$3.95.

Quality of service: Mostly young and enthusiastic servers seem genuinely proud of their product and eager to share their favorites.

Noise level: Conversations can get a little boisterous when the small dining room is full, which was the case on both of our visits.

Bar: Beer and wine only, featuring seven craft beers on tap and an affordable wine list.

Accessibility: Fully accessible.

Grade: ★ ★ ★

Ratings are based on a scale of zero to four stars. (One star means fair; 2 stars, good; 3 stars, very good; 4 stars, exceptional. Zero stars: Not Recommended.) Each rating should be measured against comparable restaurants. Plain Dealer reviewers make at least two anonymous visits to each restaurant and do not accept complimentary meals.