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Little Wonder Italian Restaurants

of New York

by Pietro di Donato

PHOTOGRAPH BY BURT GLINN

● The calendar of my people begins with the Feast of the Circumcision on January first and ends on December thirty-first with the Feast of good San Silvestro. Thus, every day of our year is festive. We mark time according to the advent of the chestnut, the season of the *fava* bean, the artichoke and the tender mushroom, of the suckling pig or she-kid goat, of the eel just right, or prawns when they skip fatly and the squids when they jet sweetest. At the eating board of my childhood our custom was to say grace, kiss the bread mother baked and spill a drop of wine father made, toward heaven's thirst. Verily, food thus sanctified tastes better.

Italian literature was born at the table and bows to mankind's stomach. In his *Georgics*, Vergil gives the laurel to lentils, *ceci* beans and acorn-fatted swine roasting over a fire of hazelwood. Columbus, seeking passage to the spices of India, stumbled upon primitive America and thus proved that our planet was a pock-marked ball in space. The artist Caravaggio, when served a badly seasoned dish of artichokes, ordered his wretched cook drawn and quartered. I agree with Caravaggio. America honors her successful men on dollar bills and Mount Rushmore, but Italians relate true worth by immortalizing a pope or king on the label of an olive-oil or tomato can, and name cheeses and antipastos after poets, composers and opera stars.

The stomach, properly appeased, makes for health, cheer and pleasure of all the senses. And Lord Stomach has a competent memory; mine reminds me nostalgically of baby lamb stuffed with aromatic herbs and roasted over a slow fire of beechwood, cooked by shepherds in the mountains of my Abruzzi while one played the bagpipe and we all sang.

I live on the Long Island shore, and this very moment I am cooking fruit of the sea that I have garnered with hook, rake and net. There is no place to compare with one's

RISTORANTE PUGLIA, at 189 Hester Street, features capozzelle al forno—sheephead cooked in a charcoal oven. Its motto, vero ritrovo familiare (see window), means "true assembly of the familiars." The co-owner, Gregorio Garofalo, is flanked by two old pals.

own kitchen whether it be in hovel, penthouse or ship's galley. It is fun to have a craving like that of a pregnant woman for a certain dish—to shop for it, cook it, serve it, and behold the contentment of family and friends. Fond food at home is economical and rewarding; next best is a restaurant that offers *casalinga* (home-style) cooking—one that fits into the "Little Wonder" category.

A Little Wonder restaurant, I should explain, is small, unpretentious, and usually located on a side street. Some are family enterprises with papa the chef, mama the cashier, and a daughter or niece serving the food. They have only a few tables, usually covered with checkered cloths. An important qualification: prices must be reasonable—maximum for a meal, including drink and tip, should not top \$6.00. Although there are Little Wonder restaurants of every nationality in New York, my tour is devoted to Italian ones. We will start in midtown Manhattan and work downtown to places known almost exclusively to the Italian-Americans who live there.

So come with me to some of my favorite places, and observe my rubrics: enter the restaurant with a sharp hunger, slide your feet under the table—*memento mori* (how brief our stay!)—and consign all your troubles to hell. Think beauty, say grace, eat leisurely and try not to be a pig.

Tony's Italian Kitchen. 212 West 79th Street, has an atmosphere of pastel aquamarine elegance. The service leaves nothing to be desired. Chef Arcangelo is from Pietrolferozzana, in my own Abruzzi region. I have watched him perform his art, relished his dishes and rate him as a master Italian cook. You can eat most satisfyingly *alla carta* for as little as \$1.25, or have a very good dinner for from \$3.00 to \$4.00. One for example: rich antipasto *di casa*, cheese

ravioli, half a chicken *cacciatore* with mushrooms, then salad, dessert and *caffè*.

Arcangelo cooks for me a *stracciatella* (consommé) *alla Romana*, *rigatoni* (wide-ribbed spaghetti) with the *ragù d'agnello* (ragout of lamb) of Abruzzi, the bitter mustardy *broccoli di rape affogati*, and the exotic *costolette in cartoccio* (veal chop, mushrooms, *prosciutto*, Marsala wine and herbs, sealed in heavy paraffin paper and baked to succulence in the oven.) In the upper midtown area Tony's Arcangelo has few peers in *cucina italiana*.

I have known the **Red Devil** at 111 West 48th Street for over twenty years. The unique *ristorante* atmosphere of the *Diavolo Rosso* originated in Naples in 1836 with the Pariente and Vicente families and was transplanted to the New World in 1915. The front dining room is framed with ornate comfortable booths with high backs for privacy; the rear dining room, with the magnificent kitchen in full view, has friendly family tables. The main mural portrays a mountain road, donkey, peasants, a fat friar carrying a chicken, an umbrella and a sack of victuals, and behind him is a merry red Mephisto pointing the way *al Diavolo Rosso*—to the Red Devil. The other murals depict places around Naples: Sorrento, Vesuvius, Posilipo, Capri, Ischia; and there are lighted tambourines on the walls philosophizing with Italian script about the changes in man's virility from the ages of twenty to seventy. When you enter you will like the Red Devil immediately. There you are likely to see such Italian-food lovers as Fred Coe, Winthrop Sargent, Gene Tunney and Arthur Miller. I suggest the assorted antipasto \$1.00 (enough for two); *minestra* (soup) *alla maritato* (wedding), 60c; home-made ravioli, \$1.25; veal *scaloppini* in Marsala wine with mushrooms, \$2.25; home-made rum cake or cheesecake, 45c, a generous portion of any imported cheese, 60c, and an *espresso* (demitasse of good strong Italian coffee), 15c. Dinner reservations are advisable.

About a mile south we come to 251 East 31st Street, a town house whose tended shrubbery *Continued on Page 188*

grocery offered VINE-RIPEN Tomatoes. In Rocky Mount, N.C., Tom Bailey renders Service on ALL MAKE TRUCK. And near the Georgia-Florida line, where U.S. 301 branches from U.S. 1, a sign urges you to stay on U.S. 1 Because of LESS TRUCKS.

The charge-sheet is longer if you'll accept ambiguities as bad grammar. One of these appeared again and again in every state I crossed, in this form or some unimproved variation: THROWING THRASH ON

HIGHWAY FINE UP TO \$500. A restaurant in southeastern Georgia (I can't decipher my note on the name of the town) boasts proudly of its TRULY OLD SOUTHERN COOKING. I was told about another specimen, spotted by an incredulous child on the approach to a Florida roadside zoo: SNAKE, the sign said, 500 FEET! (I myself confess to a twinge of astonishment when I read, near Calypso, N.C., a public invitation to patronize the FARMERS' WHSE.)

From ambiguities it is only a short step to superfluities and obscurities. Here, as in the TRASH warning, highway officials are frequent offenders. On divided roads, for instance, they tell you to KEEP OFF MEDIAN. Surely this is an inexcusably pretentious and pedantic word!

The proof is that it makes even the officials uneasy—signs on Florida's Sunshine State Parkway speak of "median," but the Parkway's own brochure warns against "crossing, driving or parking on *medial* strip." Wouldn't a plain "Keep Off," posted on the median/medial, meet the requirement? Another sign orders NO U TURN ON PARKWAY. Where else?

Finally, I'd like to mention, merely *mention*, those serial signs—not Burma-Shave's, which are usually amusing, but the eyesore billboards that disfigure mile after mile of my route: the pecan sellers (with their "divinities" and their "creamy pecan fudges"), the Old South Bar-B-Q ("We're Waitin' For Ya!"), and especially the South of the Border Motel. ("This S.O.B. is Really First-Class—30 Miles," and "Four Honeymoon Suites, Hair-Conditioned—19 Miles," and "Ma'am, Your Sleep Ees Showing—14 Miles," and at blessed last, "Go Slo, Amigo—Thees Ees Eet!"). I don't know who writes these stomach-turners, or why. But if, as I suspect, his object is to scare me away from the premises, boy, has he succeeded!

THE END

LITTLE WONDER ITALIAN RESTAURANTS OF NEW YORK

Continued from Page 93

behind a wrought-iron railing bespeaks gentility. A hardly discernible sign says *Marchi*. The word "restaurant" does not apply, for as you descend three steps and enter you sense and know you are the guest of a family whose home is a gracious sanctuary. You are now within Francesca and Lorenzo Marchi's refined and ordered world. You will be cordially met and led into one of the three sweet dining rooms. Your table is immaculately appointed. You will not be asked what you wish. You will be served the same perfect dinner that Francesca has put on the table every night for thirty years.

The quality and combination of dishes make as good a balanced dinner as I have ever experienced: a basket of so-good-smelling Italian breads, a platter of pristine tomatoes, large melon slices, big black and green olives, stalks of radiant celery, garden-fresh, green-topped fat radishes; a plate of wafer-thin, properly spiced imported salami; a salad of raw red cabbage, endive and peppers; light, oven-hot *lasagna*, stuffed with meat and sprinkled with cheese; a dish of delicately fried *merluzzo* (the

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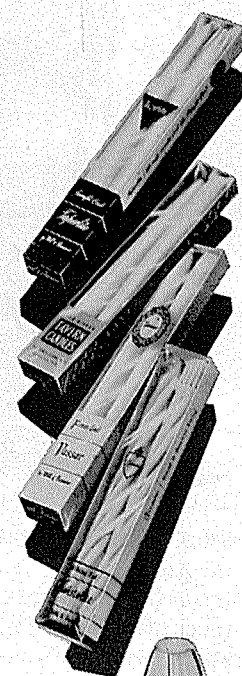
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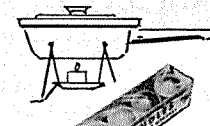


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FOOD
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'silvery-flaked whiting that Italians love), cold beets and marinated string beans, half a spring chicken broiled to a glaze, choicest milk-fed roast veal, butter-sautéed button mushrooms, braised celery, and a tray of supreme Italian cheeses; a large silver bowl of ripe peaches, plums, apples, oranges, tangerines, bananas and pears; and for dessert, two homemade pastries, lemon-flavored *crema frita* and the sugar-dusted, curly, flat, crisp *crostoli*, the delicate Mediterranean sweet, complemented with cups of *caffè espresso*.

Francesca and Lorenzo are descendants of centuries-old restaurant families from Udine, in northeast Italy. Fair Francesca wears her long hair in the old-fashioned coronet braid; she is comely, calm, and emanates nobility of character. "Forgive me, but we are proud of our place," she says. "It is our home and work. We love America and we are here to stay." One visit to Marchi's will endear it to you. Dinner, refinement and happiness for \$5.50.

Now I'm going to take you to New York's Little Italy, unfamiliar to the average New Yorker and literally unexplored by the out-of-towner.

"Without gorgeous women and divine food I would die!" says my old pal John Ballato. Sometimes I agree with these sentiments. In any case, **Ballato's** intimate restaurant at 55 *East Houston Street*, with its harmoniously toned walls, hi-fi music and pictures of

Roman ruins, is my dining sanctum sanctorum, for I have long been a disciple of his table.

Sagacious union officials, shrewd wine importers, art dealers, *Il Progresso* journalists, intellectuals, former Chief Purser Morabito of the Italian liner *Leonardo da Vinci*, August Bellanca, elder statesman of labor, and Edward Corsi, former Commissioner of Immigration, go ritualistically to Ballato's.

Ballato is a sapient Sicilian from Messina. He has sampled and researched the Old Country's *ristoranti* from knee to toe, from Bolzano's Gambero (Crawfish), Verona's Dodici Apostoli (Twelve Apostles), Bologna's Pappagallo (Parrot), Capri's Gatto Bianco (White Cat), and on down to the Giugiu in Sicily's Agrigento, and he uses the recipes of all these regions. Go truly *Italiano* and ask Ballato for some of these traditional dishes:

Risotto alla Milanese, rice cooked in butter, chicken and beef stock, onions, white wine and saffron, and sprinkled with grated cheese.

Saltimbocca, veal and *prosciutto* rolled and sautéed in butter. Rome.

Fiore de zucchini, squash blossoms cooked in an omelette. Campagna.

Tortini di carciofi, tiny artichokes fried and served in omelette. Florence.

Pollo alla Babi, spring chicken parts browned in olive oil and flavored with bay leaf, rosemary, white wine and cognac, and served with stuffed mushrooms. Turin.

Pasta con le sarde, a pasta with sardines and a sauce of olive oil, baby fennel shoots, fresh crushed pineapple, muscatel grape juice and saffron. The pride of passionate Sicily.

Ballato is the prince of sea-fruit chefs. His broiled *scampi alla Ballato*, and his *brodetto di pesce assortito marechiaro* (an island of whiting garlanded with mussels, clams, whelks, periwinkles, shrimp, squid and sea urchins in a salubrious herb-

flavored sauce) could be subjects for still-life paintings. Ballato's is most certainly for *i buongustai*. Lunch from about \$2.00. Dinner from \$3.00.

One of New York City's most entrancing settings is Battery Park. I go there to breathe in the salt bay air and watch the young lovers on the benches. I like to go there at sunset with a copy of *Leaves of Grass*. I gaze at all that I want to reach out



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and caress—the hills of Brooklyn, the Narrows, the Statue of Liberty; the Prometheus of Jersey's shore, Hoboken, the great ships—and I sing with Whitman, "Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers. . . Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul." Then I go to Fusco's, a few paces away at 18 Beaver Street.

Guido Fusco, from Pescara, the city adjoining my Vasto, started his restaurant

in 1907 when the circular Colonial Fort nearby was the welcoming gateway for immigrant millions. Wars, prosperity, Prohibition, depressions and social modes have come and gone, but the Fusco family, now led by college-bred sons Guido, Jr., and Mario, still uphold the Fusco standard of the finest Italian cooking.

The manager's name is Phil, and he sees to it that you are served impeccably. The chef is a *Triestino*, his assistant a *Siciliano*.

The walls are paneled walnut, with fine oil paintings and an air of present-day Rome, classically baroque. Here you will see bankers, lovely secretaries, modest clerks, businessmen and shipping magnates such as Isbrandtsen.

At Fusco's, each dish is prepared for the satisfaction of the *epicuro*. One of Fusco's cooking secrets is the light golden olive oil made from the first crush of olives from its own groves in Italy. Let me sug-

gest the beef tongue *alla Fiorentina*, breast of capon *Parmigiana*, homemade *lasagna*, shrimp and lobster *alla marinara*, and the spring chicken basted with butter and white wine.

Luncheon from \$2.50. Dinner from about \$4.00.

Lanza's at 168 First Avenue, between 10th and 11th streets, was founded in 1904 by Michele Lanza, who had been a chef at the Court of King Victor Emmanuel III. Michele, with his mustache, goatee and formal attire, had the appearance of an impresario. Enrico Caruso ate many of maestro Lanza's regal dishes and, as you enter the vestibule there, you are confronted with a large bust of Enrico. Lanza's still has the Italian New York atmosphere of the early 1900's, and with little urging of the mind you can imagine Italian storekeepers, doctors and lawyers of yesteryear performing gastronomic rites there to the great god Paunch.

The menu offers about 200 items, covering antipastos, *zuppe* (soups), *paste*, entrees of veal, beef, lamb, pork and fowl, *insalate* (salads), *verdura*



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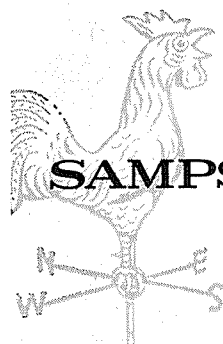
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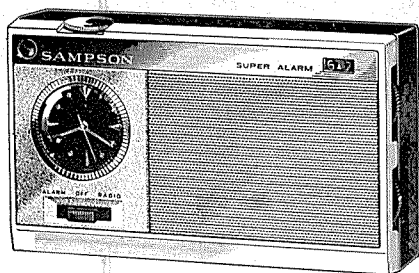
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(greens), *frutti di mare* (sea food), omelettes, special suggestions such as *cervelli al gratte* (brains), *fritto misto* (mixed fried vegetables and meats), *formaggi* (cheeses) and *dolci* (desserts).

Michele, Jr., tells me, "We have cooks from the Old Country. Today imported cooks are hard to get—restaurants steal them from each other. If good Italian cooking disappears, blame the McCarran-Walter Act." Michele likes to quote the sayings of his father, such as: "At table one does not age." "Garden-fresh vegetables give you the joy of drinking the sunset and eating the landscape." "The right diet gives brilliance to the eye, youth to the skin and support to the muscles."

At Lanza's my two favorites are *veal scaloppine con funghi* (mushrooms), and *stocca fisso* (dried cod) *alla Messinese*.

Lunch—from \$1.50. Dinner starts at \$2.50.

Antica Roma, at 94 Baxter Street, a few blocks east of Broadway and just off Canal Street, will prove thoroughly enjoyable to your appetite, pride and pocket. It was started years ago by Steffano Miranda and is now directed by his son Dino, a courtly and accommodating gentleman. The Mirandas came from mountainous Benevento in the Campania region. Legend has it that Benevento was founded by the son of Ulysses and Circe.

At Antica Roma my favorites are the spinach in broth, shrimp *reganate* (*oregano*), *cannelloni* (pipe-shaped pasta stuffed with meat, cheese), *manicotti* (pasta muffs filled with ricotta), and the spring leg of baby lamb, savory with garlic and wine sauce.

It is always interesting to talk with Dino about the natural pleasures of life, and especially his daily shopping rounds in Little Italy. Antica Roma is the rare place where such selective guests as a brace of priests or a covey of nuns come to partake of fine Italian food at permissible prices. Dino Miranda, his good food and quiet, efficient service, merit praise. Meals from about \$1.50.

The **Luna Restaurant**, at 112 Mulberry Street opposite the rectory of the Most Precious Blood Church, is as narrow and small as any tenement flat, but colorfully Neapolitan. This is the neighborhood where you may wander about the shops of Little Italy and learn what Italians buy for their tables. And who knows, while you are there, one of the many Feasts of the Saints may be in progress.

The Luna was established by Mamma Alberta Manna in 1908 when Mulberry Bend was an immigrant-teeming source of many subsequent Little Italys throughout America.

How does an illiterate immigrant woman start a restaurant? She lives in a flat on the street level; she cooks for husband, brood, assorted relatives and womanless cronies of her husband. She sets such a large, good table every day that she decides to feed paying guests too. So she transforms the flat into a public eating place, she moves her fam-

ily upstairs and her husband and children help her in the business.

Alberta's cooking has delighted generations. Today, tiny, white-haired Mamma Alberta sits in the corner by the cash register and wine closet; she's blind now, but she recognizes her guests' enthusiastic voices. Hands folded in hard-earned peace, and with her fox terrier Lady at her side, she is still the matriarch. Day in and day out from morn to night Mamma Alberta

sits in the corner, listens, responds, smiles, sleeps, awakens and resignedly waits, for this life and its human problems are not the beginning and end. Two daughters carry on; sweet-faced Philomena cooks and supervises, and friendly Annina takes charge of the serving.

On the walls, in the wild tints of Italian ice cream, are scenes of Naples. Teasing smells waft from the open kitchen while a

Continued on Page 193

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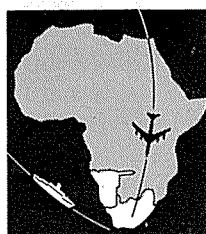
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Continued from Page 191

juke box resounds with such Neapolitan street songs as *O Lola!* or *O Mafuso!* Politicos appease their immense appetites at Luna's. Jolly Assemblyman Louis De Salvio, accompanied by stout cohorts, sheds his coat and tie, rolls up his sleeves, dons a bib and plows into platters of *braccioni* (stuffed rolled beef) and *fettuccine alla Philomena*. City Controller Larry Gerosa has been known to go overboard for *trippa alla Luna*.

Luna is open around the clock and in the day's newborn hours, while metropolitans entertain ten million dreams, you may see Buddy Hackett, the comic, and Walter Winchell swallowing yards of *linguini con vongole* (clams) with the gusto of ditch-diggers; or with the spicy juices of *lobster fra diavolo* and *cozziche* (mussels) *alla marechiaro* threatening to drip from their chins.

Philomena, a Mona Lisa of a maiden, is the dedicated mistress of the kitchen, and Luna's guiding ray. Whenever my friend Father Vittorio and his brother Franciscans across the street look the least wan and lean, she sends hot fragrant dishes to the refectory table. Philomena means nightingale, and Luna, of course, the moon. Allow yourself real Neapolitan *cucina*; go to Philomena's Luna.

Lunch from \$1.50. Dinner from about \$2.50.

In old West Greenwich Village, at 42 Bedford Street, is **Mary's Restaurant**. It is in a small, grandmotherly, rosy-cheeked brick building of two stories. Tresses of sweet peas hang from flower boxes at the sill of each window.

Mary and Pasquale D'Agosto live on the top floor; in the step-down basement and on the first floor they have served authentic Italian dishes since 1916. When you enter Mary's you leave the impatient city behind and are nestled in a cozy home.

Mary is the *padronessa* who capably sees to it that her "children"—guests who were young when they first ate there—are blissfully fed. If you follow her each morning to the Bleeker Street markets a block away you will learn the art of purchasing choice fowl, meats, greens, groceries and foodstuffs at cunning cost. She knows what season is best for certain fish and meats and fruits and when the chicory or *broccoli di rape* are in prime. The dining rooms and the flat above are her queendom, but the open kitchen in the basement off the dining room and wine closet, is Pasquale's sovereign domain.

Pasquale, an oval-shaped elf of a man, is not the frenetic cook;


he whistles to himself and sometimes quotes Old World parables. Within reach he keeps a never-empty tumbler of white wine from which he pours, as he explains it, "A few ounces into the pot to make flower forth the hidden delicacy of the food, and the rest into Pasquale to fight the stove's heat with the fire of the grape." He moves unhurriedly,

rhythmically, basting the *braccioni* with an artist's touch, turning the sheepheads in their oven pan, draining *pasta* in the colander, stirring tomato sauce, sowing finely chopped parsley over steaming, yawning clams, orchestrating his attention to the many simmering, perking, gurgling pots, his nose telling him at what moment the

precious peak of flavor is achieved. As he rolls out the egg and cream-rich dough with the *matterello* for the *pasta* to be shaped into noodles, *lasagna*, *manicotti* and *gnocchi*, he says, "The land of my Basilicata has it like Scripture that a woman is not a wife until she can make fifteen kinds of *pasta*; and for sea-fruit casserole she must include at least



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thirteen kinds of crustaceans, mollusks and fish." It is heartwarming to watch Pasquale pat a curved, tender veal rump, winking as he puts it into the oven.

There is no menu at Mary's. One of Mary's regulars, a portly lid-lifter and pot-smeller, asks Pasquale, "What is the eating today?" With a shrug of modesty the answer is, "A dear little soup of lentils and escarole with egg droppings and cheese, a plate of *ossi buchi con risotto*, and what-

ever else Mary has brought from the markets for me to do by hand."

Ossi buchi con risotto, a dish beloved in Lombardy, is veal shanks and knuckles with saffron-flavored rice. Pasquale rolls the meaty marrow bones in flour, browns them thoroughly in butter, adds pepper, salt, carrots, celery, onion, a kiss of garlic, pours white wine over the bones, bastes with stock, finally adds whole tomatoes and tomato paste, grated lemon rind, and on

goes the cover for the simmering. Saporific is the word for Pasquale's *ossi buchi*, and every dish he lovingly prepares, whether it is the common *pasta fagioli*, his devilfish, garden salad *alla Basilicata*, *lasagna*, or breast of stuffed veal, is perfection; cheeses, fruits, pastries, and *caffè* as you like them.

Mary's is your home and you will love it. Lunch from about \$1.25, dinner from \$2.00.

Arturo's is at 51 MacDougal Street, in Greenwich Village. It is unpretentious and neat and the food is honestly Italian. You can have *minestrone* for only 40c, a heaping plate of spaghetti for 75c, a filling dish of veal *Parmigiana* and *ravioli*, a meal in itself, for \$1.50. In nice weather you may dine at tables in a little outdoor Italy, in the backyard behind the kitchen, which under sun or stars is snugly alfresco. Arturo is a reserved and respectful man. A year ago he found an injured duck in the back yard. He doctored the duck back to health. The duck, George, has wisely made Arturo's kitchen his permanent home.

Fellin Restaurant and Bocce is south of Washington Square in the center of Greenwich Village at 216 Thompson Street. Walk about the Village first, poke in at the handcraft shops, mosey in and out of the loony bars and espresso joints, listen to the weird chatter of the unwashed beatniks, the bizarre, the bohemians, the mincing men and swaggering women, all moving about as if in a never-waking dream, and then go into Fellin's Bocce for a hearty dinner.

You will find it ever busy, crowded with normal Villagers, tourists, artists, writers, TV people, Off-Broadway actors and decent what-nots. Half of the large rear room is occupied by a *bocce* alley where amateur and serious players bowl away.

Mamma Giuditta (Judith) Fellin is from North Italy, and has been cooking diligently in that kitchen for more than thirty years.

Order a sound soup of *ravioli in brodo*, 50c, or *spinaci in brodo*, 30c, the *Genovese al pesto* (*spaghettini* with butter, covered with an uncooked sauce of olive oil, pestle-crushed fresh basil, and plentifully sprinkled with grated Parmesan cheese), 75c, *manzo bollito* (boiled beef) with sauce vinaigrette, 95c, or calves liver, Venetian style, \$1.25, or veal *cacciatore*, \$1.25, *Gorgonzola* cheese, 40c, a *spumoni*, 30c and a *caffè espresso*, 15c.

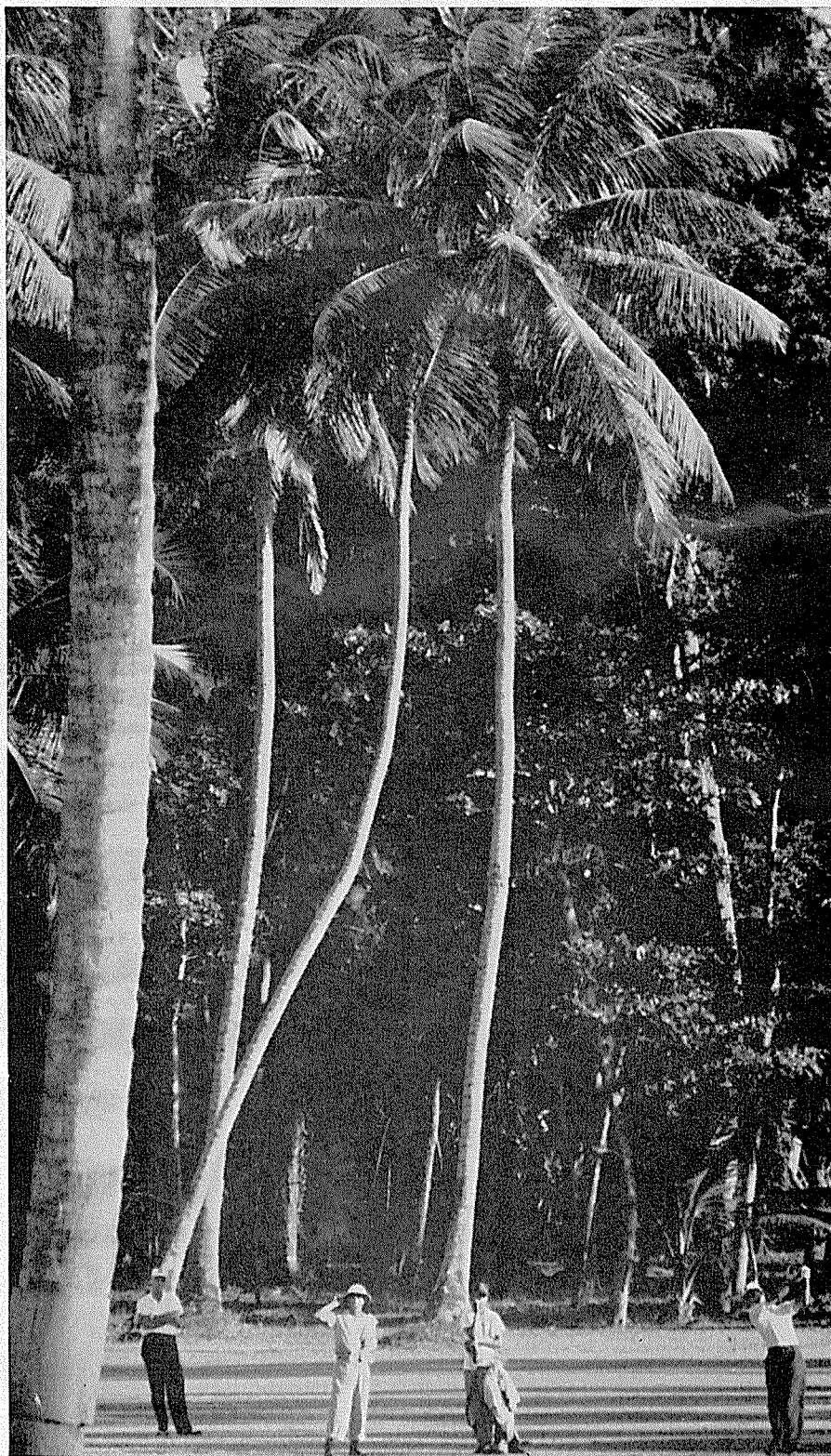
You will never be hungry, sad or lonely at Fellin's Bocce.

On weekdays working-class Italians eat frugal, healthful peasant dishes of fish, animal interiors, and an endless variation of pastas combined with every sort of bean and green, and leftovers bundled in omelettes; Sunday, following Mass, comes the lavish spread.

If you are a regular guy without nonsense and want to eat like the basic *paesano* go to the *Ristorante Puglia*, *vero ritrovo familiare* (true assembly of the familiars), at 189 Hester

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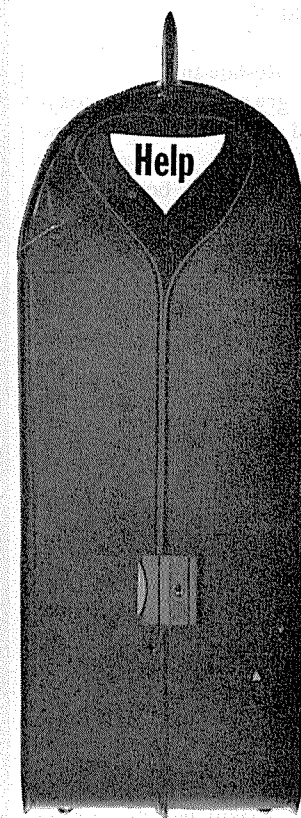


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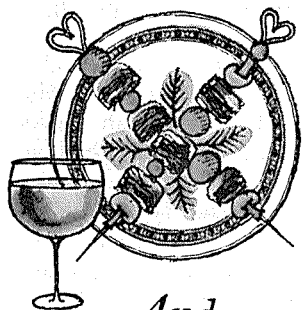
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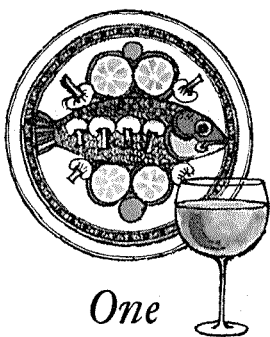
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Street between Mott and Mulberry Streets. The Puglia region takes in the heel and tendon of the Italian leg: Foggia, Bari, Taranto, Brindisi, and has sent many fierce Southern immigrants to America.

This is a down-to-earth place frequented by ravenous young Italian-Americans and able-bodied workmen who spark an atmosphere that seems to make English an alien language. The place is drab and garishly lighted, recalling with tristful affection the tenement kitchen of my boyhood. But hungry wage earners, who know nothing but genuine Italian food, see only what is on the plate before them—and it had better be good!

If you are a man of the people and want to eat Italian food of good faith at the cheapest price, go to the Ristorante Puglia and have these dishes: *pastina in brodo*, 40c; mouth-drying fried *cipollini* (shallot bulbs), 75c; a *pasta* of *perciatelli* with hot sausage, 85c, tripe with white or red sauce, 40c, *soffritto* (a stew of lung, heart, liver and kidneys), 40c, tongue in sauce, 60c, or a *capozzelle al forno* (sheepshead), charred over coal, 35c. Now and then Father Vittorio, of the Most Precious Blood Church, and I set our teeth to work on a couple of well-roasted sheepsheads, brains and all, brought into the rectory from the Puglia. This is a really-real Italian place where you can learn about life from the aged "familiaris" who sit about, talking and nursing their daily flagons of wine.

Like it or not, America must bow to a couple of doughty Italian invaders: the pizza and the conquering "hero." The pizza, which bids fair to excommunicate the celebrated hot dog, was born in Naples.

Luigino's at 147 West 48th Street makes more than twenty different versions of first-rate pizza, 85c and up. Hawk-nosed, loquacious, Neapolitan Luigino has been known for decades as *Il Generalissimo* of the pizza oven.

There are practical booths, a large refectory family table, and the staunch, busy oven. On the walls are hundreds of autographed photos of satisfied, pizza-loving public figures.

I suggest a departure from the stereotype; have *Il Generalissimo* fire you a daring pizza *alla Luigino* (prosciutto, ricotta cheese and tomatoes), for \$1.00, or *alla Jerry Colonna* (mozzarella, mushrooms, homemade sausage, onion and garlic), \$1.20.

Let us sit and talk of the Italian "hero" that has unhorsed the Fourth Earl of Sandwich.

As a bricklayer on skyscrapers I, like the other Italian workmen, brought to the job a giant's lunch my mother made for me, and on bitterly cold days I would toast a great sandwich—containing a lobster or chicken or veal and peppers—over a wood fire in a mortar tub. The Americans, while nibbling their pallid jelly-and-peanut-butter sandwiches, would drool at the sight and smell of my lusty hero. Of course, they made fun of the hero and its bearers in those days. Justice prevailed

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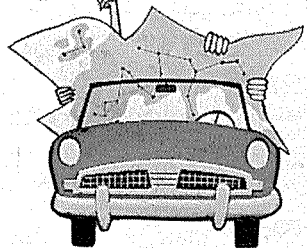
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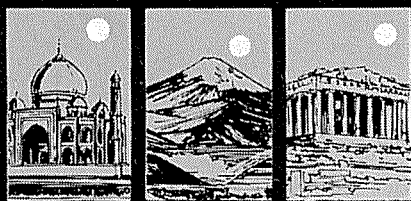
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and the hero, hot or cold, won the palm. (And, remember, heroes are made, not born.)

At Manganaro's Hero-Boy Restaurant at 492 Ninth Avenue, between 37th and 38th Streets, the whole gamut of heroes is to be had: fresh-baked Italian bread enfolding cold cuts such as *moriadella*, *zampino*, *capicolla*, *prosciutto*, and *testa*, at 40c a hero; or hot heroes with homemade sausage and peppers in tomato sauce, squid, veal cutlet *Parmigiana*, anchovies, eggplant; or imported-cheese heroes; any of these sandwiches being an entire meal. You are likely to see Joe DiMaggio there clasping a hero with two hands.

Manganaro's makes "Dainty Hero-Boys tailored to ladyfinger size upon request for Dainty Heroines with Dainty Appetities!" They also provide the ultimate, the Olympic Six-Foot Hero, two yards of it, the decathlon of sandwiches, loaded with a dozen kinds of meats, cheeses, sardines, anchovies, peppers, vegetables, mushrooms and salads, which "feeds 25 hungry Heroes and Heroines," for \$28.50, delivered. This noble hero is a favorite at penthouse parties.

There are times when one's teeth spoil for a feast of pastries, cold sweets and *espresso* alone. Then, an indispensable rite of Italian gastronomy is to go to a *pasticceria*. On Sundays my robust bricklaying friends would entrench themselves in a *pasticceria* and wage pastry-gorging contests. My grandmother Teresina was crazy about sweets; whenever she sat down at table, she would first wolf down the dessert.

The name Ferrara is synonymous with all spiced, fruited, nutted and baked or iced sweetmeats that so arouse gentle, pleasant emotions. Established in 1892 at 195 Grand Street, Café Ferrara is the oldest, largest and best *pasticceria* in America. The sweet-scented cookies, pastries, *torrone* (nougat), *panettone* (little cakes), *pan-*

forte (honey-filled cake with nuts and candied fruit peel), *gelati* and *spumoni* (two kinds of ice cream) in profuse display provide a wonderland for the lover of *bei dolci*—beautiful sweets.

My friend Peter Lepore is the owner and magic-master of this sugary empire. The great kitchen with its serious, artistic crafts always impresses me, what with the mammoth oven and its rotating shelves, the dough mixers and the gas-fired caldrons that receive the alchemy of almond and filbert nut oils, bitter kernel, crushed fruits, honey, creams, shredded vanilla beans, ground cinnamon sticks and flavor essences.

There you will see specialties in process: *Cannoli alla Siciliano* (cylinders of thin pastry with filling), *sfgliatelle alla Napolitana* (Neapolitan thin, flaky pastry), *gateau* (rum cake) and *zuppa inglese* (rum cake topped with whipped cream and flavored with chocolate). From start to finish all operations are instructed and watched over by the *capo operaio* (head of baking). He guides the mixing while keeping an eye on the *fornaio* (oven man) and he prepares the work for the *decoratore*, who designs lacy sculptured cakes that will be consumed at parties, christenings and espousals.

In other departments the nougat is made, and the famous Italian ices and elaborate, tasteful *spumoni* are prepared. Many years ago my Uncle Saverio, who lived on Mulberry Street, was one of the ice-cream makers in Ferrara's.

Going to Ferrara's is a cherished tradition. Take your friends there, sit and philosophize as though you were in a *pasticceria* of Rome. Have a *digestivo* and indulge your sweet tooth to your heart's content.

Again I say, *memento mori*, think beauty, say grace, and *buon appetito!*

THE END

Pietro di Donato, who makes his first appearance in *Holiday* with this article, is the author of *Christ in Concrete* and the recent *Three Circles of Light*, moving novels of Italian-American life.—Ed.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, July 2, 1946 and June 11, 1960 (74 Stat. 208)

Of *HOLIDAY*, published monthly at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for October 1, 1961.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

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Editor, Ted Patrick, New York, N.Y.

Managing Editor, None.
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TED PATRICK, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 31st day of August, 1961.

WILLIAM C. ZIMMERMANN,

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My commission expires February 3, 1965.