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# L’Ardente Restaurant in DC

Hoyt Hilsman · Tuesday, May 28th, 2024

Simple Italian with a fun and creative twist is the theme at L’Ardente, one of several fine new restaurants that have open in D.C. in the past few years. The creation of chef David Deshaies, L’Ardente evokes a comfy elegance and unfussy presentation of traditional Italian cuisine.

L’Ardente in Italian refers to the “passionate one” and the restaurant reflects the passion not only for the food of Italy, but also for the creative passion of chef Deshaies. A classic Italian dish is lasagna, which is served elsewhere with heavy doses of cheese and tomato sauce.  The challenge — find a more creative and elegant way to serve what originated as a peasant dish without losing its distinctive character.

Deshaies' inspired solution is the forty-layer lasagna, which is a brilliant feat of food engineering. The lasagna is cut into thin layers — like a layer cake — then rearranged into delicious and delicate rectangle. Instead of being overwhelmed by heavy layers of pasta, each layer is a delicate taste of meat, cheese and tomato. The result is a more subtle and elegant presentation of the traditional dish — the forty-layer lasagna.

Another creative marrying of traditional and novel is the duck ravioli, which is served in a small cup with a single ravioli in a cream-based sauce with a sprinkling of truffle foam. It is a light and tasty mouthful of flavors.  The seafood  linguine in a base of spicy pomodoro sauce is also unusual, with spicy overtones, a lovely departure from the norm.

A surprise delight was the grilled white asparagus served cold with prosciutto and hollandaise sauce.

Desaert options were varied — especially appealing were the strawberry semifreddo served with vanilla mascarpone and fresh strawberries as well as the amore mora, a lime mousse with blackberry compote served on angel food cake.

Service at L’Ardente was attentive and correct.  Noise level is reasonable and a variety of cocktails make for a perfect evening.

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