

Lori's Picks

Sweet Basil

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My mother was born with my grandmother's "green thumb," who was born with her mother's "green thumb," and so on as far back as I can trace. I, however, was not born with a "green thumb," save for my ability to keep three out of four basil plants alive during the summer months. Needless to say, the name "Sweet Basil" accompanied with rumors of family-sized portions was enough to attract me to Jay Fazio's Italian-American eatery.

Opening the door to a family oriented restaurant, where the smells of simmering sauces wafted to me over the all-you-can-eat salad bar, brought a smile to my face as Jay led the way to my waiting companions. Our meal started with an array of stuffed mushrooms. Filled to bursting capacity with parmesan, paprika, crabmeat and softened bread stuffing, the flavor of the mushroom blended through with every bite, welcoming you to dip knife and fork to the plate again and again. Following our foray into the "fruit of the forest," my companions and I made it a mission to try every component of the never-ending salad bar. Our plates quickly became piled high with romaine, black olives, carrots, peppers, chickpeas, cucumbers, onions, sweet coleslaw and garlic croutons, while a second plate was

used to sample every type of dressing imaginable!

Once our plates were cleared, our mouths began to salivate as we watched our next course come straight from the kitchen to our awaiting table. At the recommendation of Jay, my male companion had ordered the prime rib with stuffed shrimp. Cooked to medium-rare perfection, the prime rib was a mouth-watering present from the chef's kitchen to my companion's anticipating palate. The dish's side plate of stuffed shrimp, rice pilaf, broccoli, and mashed potatoes was a miniature feast that covered all necessary parts of a fantastic meal: protein, vegetables, and the ocean's finest crustaceans. Whilst the meat lover of the group enjoyed one of Sweet Basil's specialties, my other companion and I found ourselves equally enthralled with our main courses. She enjoyed a tightly rolled eggplant rollatine stuffed with ricotta, pit ham, and covered in a savory marinara sauce. This classic Italian dish saved her a \$5000 plane ticket by transporting her on a side dish of penne to the boot-shaped country with every bite! My portabella ravioli rounded out the evening by delivering a sensational final punch. Covered with a delightful vodka sauce that caused me to quote Charles



Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, saying, "please sir, I want some more' bread for dipping," the portabella ravioli was a fantastic finish to a wonderful meal.

Resisting the urge to let out our pants by a belt loop, my companions and I left Jay Fazio's Sweet Basil Restaurant with a promise to have dessert on the next trip! With their weekly Saturday night comedy routine right around the corner, I know that I will be returning to Sweet Basil for a fantastic Italian-American meal and a good laugh!

~L. Parker~



Sweet Basil
Italian-American Restaurant

Queensbury, New York