

The News

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Luna has a good Italian fare

Luna, like the moon for which it is named, has four phases. First, a dining room not unlike many other small restaurants. Second, a kitchen/shop, with a pass-through to the sidewalk area on Flagler avenue, so take-out customers need not enter the restaurant-a good idea judging by the number of downtown workers who flock to the window during their lunch hours. Third, a delivery service to businesses within a one-mile radius, available weekends from 11 am to 1:15 pm - free for orders totaling \$12 or more. And, fourth, catering for large and small groups.

The lunch menu, applicable from 11 am to 2 pm, weekdays, features pizza, whole and by the slice (\$1.35 and up per slice), and stromboli rolls (\$2.80 to \$3.75) - the later created from pizza dough wrapped around all sorts of fillings (Italian meats, vegetables, cheese, chicken, sausage and others), then baked. In addition, mid-day specials (\$3.50 to \$5.45) feature a different sub and pasta entree each day.

The dinner menu is available any time, from opening to closing. It includes salads (\$2.25 to \$7.95); appetizers (\$3.25 to \$7.95); pizza (\$6.25 to \$12.95) in small, medium, large and Sicilian varieties; hot and cold subs (\$3.50 to \$5.45); veal entrees (\$9.95 to \$11.75); pasta (\$5.45 to \$5.95); casseroles (\$6.25 to \$7.95); eggplant dishes (\$7.95 and \$8.95); chicken (\$8.95 to \$10.75); seafood (\$8.95 to \$10.75) and gourmet specialties (\$6.95 to \$8.95).

And, Luna offers specialty pies (\$7.45 to \$14.50), created "from old family recipes." These include a low-cholesterol diet pie on a light crust with part-skim-milk Mozzarella and fresh tomato sauce; two vegetable pies; white pie made with ricotta, Mozzarella and no sauce; stuffed pie; and deep-dish pan pizza.

All entrees are served with salad, pasta and hot garlic "knotz" (little yeast rolls coated with olive oil and sprinkled with Romano cheese - more about them in a minute).

Husband Fran and I ate dinner recently at Luna. We sampled two appetizers, six baked clams (\$4.50) and a platter of zucchini sticks (\$3.25). Both were delicious. We were particularly impressed by the subtle seasoning - garlic and oregano flavors, yes, but not overpowering. The clams were unusually well-prepared, and the zucchini were perfectly fried - crisp and dry outside, tender-crisp inside. The sauce was an excellent marinara, served piping hot.

our salads were rather ordinary - simply iceberg lettuce, with one each ripe olive, tomato wedge and cucumber slice - yet the home-made house dressing was an exceptionally nice vinaigrette with a few herbs - again, just a hint.

The hot garlic knots were addictive! No wonder everyone takes home whatever he or she cannot eat during dinner, and no wonder that night a woman bought two dozen to serve the next night her own spaghetti! Luna claims to bake as many as a busy day; they are good.

Fran ordered veal rollantine (\$11.75), served with ziti. Two thin slices of veal had been wrapped around prosciuttoe and Mozzarella, seasoned and cooked with mushroom sauce. Very good, but I would have preferred the meat cooked a little longer. The pasta was enhanced nicely by the marinara, a delicious recipe.

I chose a Luna special (\$7.95) which is a sampler of ziti, lasagna, ravioli, stuffed shell and meatball, all masked in that yummy tomato sauce and topped with Mozzarella. I had to leave a lot of food on my plate - not because it was not good tasting (it was indeed) but because the portion was quite large.

For our substantial dinners, we paid \$33.45 plus \$2 sales tax and \$5 tip, totaling \$40.45. We rate Luna:

Food - Most of it is really good.

Service - Very good.

Prices - Certainly fair enough.

Value - Good.

Atmosphere - No frills, but who needs 'em when a good cook, using good ingredients, is working in the kitchen.

Overall - We welcome such pleasing Italian food to downtown Stuart.

Hours - Monday-Saturday, 11 am to 10 pm.

Dress - Jeans, business clothes, shorts, whatever.

Alcoholic beverages - Beer and Wine.

Non-smoking section - None designated.

Wheelchair access - Satisfactory.

Credit Cards - Not accepted.

Take-outs - Full menu.