

Just Like Eating at Your Mom's (but Without the Nagging)

MARCO'S TRATTORIA



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCOS

MARCO'S TRATTORIA

Like a warm embrace from an old friend, this quaint West Hollywood restaurant has all the charm and comforts of home that make you want to kick back, relax and forget about the stress of your busy day. That's exactly what owner Marco Capanni had in mind when he opened the doors of Marco's Trattoria nearly 15 years ago.

Nestled on the corner of Santa Monica and Havenhurst, this Italian eatery is in West Hollywood's version of "little Italy." Capanni has lived on the same block of Havenhurst for the past 50 years. Remembering his days as a young man, he recalls working at the local bowling alley (now a SavOn) and taking a railcar home from La Cienega and Santa Monica. "I love this city," he explains, "I love the diversity." Perhaps that's why Capanni and his mother (who was affectionately called Mama by all) decided there was no other community with whom they'd rather share their family recipes. They opened the restaurant in 1993.

Family and home-cooked meals is what this restaurant is all about. The cozy dining room and frescos glow from candlelight as laughter and the chatter of guests fill the room. Whether you're seated in the dining room or on the romantic patio, the smell of freshly baked bread and pasta waft from the kitchen, and you can't help but feel that you're sitting in someone's home rather than in a restaurant. "We serve good, home-made comfort food," Capanni explains.

From the moment you're seated, baskets of complimentary Bruschetta Pomodoro and fresh Focaccia bread dot the checkered tablecloths. Choosing your entrée is a bit mind-boggling. With over 20 pasta dishes, plus pizzas, chicken, veal and seafood entrees, deciding on just one may take some time! A personal favorite, the Mama's Special House Pizza is always a good choice. White pizza (no red sauce), mozzarella, chicken, pesto sauce and fresh tomato make this pie light and flavorful. For a hearty meal, the Chicken Involatina practically melts in your mouth. A rolled chicken breast stuffed with asparagus, peppers,

mushrooms and provolone is bathed in marsala sauce and served on a bed of roasted potatoes and grilled veggies. Finish your meal with truly authentic Spumoni or a fresh Cannoli, and you're sure to leave with a full tummy... just like mom would want!

Marco's serves a great choice of beverages including a full wine list, beer and coffee drinks. Or if a walk across the street sounds appealing, visit the newly acquired **Café Marco**. Capanni took over Buzz Coffee in November of last year. Even though the menu of specialty coffee drinks and pastries hasn't changed, the atmosphere of this New York style café definitely has. Collections from local artists grace the exposed brick walls, and on Thursday through Saturday evenings live music fills the air. Showing his commitment to his community yet again, Capanni has shown his intention to "offer local artists a venue (for their work)." While the sidewalk tables remain for those who want to take in the sights of Santa Monica Blvd, new landscaping, rock gardens and lighting paint a much more serene picture.

Capanni and his staff at both the restaurant and café feel like family to most, including the loyal following of celebrity guests. In this city of newcomers and transplants, Marco's Trattoria and Café Marco strive to make everyone feel like they're part of the extended family. Whoever said "you can never go home again" clearly has yet to experience the hospitality of this genuine Italian eatery! **PINK**

Marco's Trattoria

8136 Santa Monica Blvd, West Hollywood, 323-650-2771.

Café Marco

8200 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, 323-650-7742

Newly revamped websites www.marcoswesthollywood.com and www.cafemarco.net offer full menus, upcoming events, celebrity photos and anecdotes.