

## The Courier's Restaurant Review by MERV HECHT-TOSCANOVA

TOSCANOVA

The Courier's Restaurant Review by MERV HECHT

Are you reminiscing about your last trip to Italy and wishing you were back there? Well, the next best thing to going back might be dinner at Toscanova.

In spite of unusually poor reviews on the internet, almost everyone agrees that this is about as close as you can get to a real Italian restaurant in the Beverly Hills area, with real Italian waiters and Italian food.

For example, the wild boar ragout and rabbit ragout pastas are delicious. A lot of people love that they carry gluten-free pasta which can be substituted in the pasta dishes. The lasagna is excellent and often appears as a special. For appetizers, the burrata with prosciutto is just like back home in Italy. The octopus salad is refreshing and light.

Whenever I've been there the service has been very good. Many of the waiters are Italian—always a plus. The happy hour is quite popular, with well-priced appetizers and good prices on drinks. With as many law firms as there are in Century City, the lawyers need a happy break from the grind.

The last few times I've been there I saw some very good looking pizza go by (\$12 for the simple one, which in my opinion is the best one to order), but I felt like seafood. On one occasion I had the Branzino (\$26) and on another the risotto mare (\$23). I had no problem finding a good bottle of wine on the wine list, although the price was no bargain.

I've skipped dessert there, so one main course and a shared bottle of wine with tax and tip usually runs about \$50 per person. For lunch, an appetizer or a pizza is plenty for me.

I think a lot of people are expecting something else when they go into Toscanova, because it's an unusual location for a standard Italian restaurant. And it's not cheap. Most of the restaurants outside of the food court in the Century City Westfield Plaza belong to chains with menus and quality just above what we find in fast food establishments. A genuine Italian restaurant is something different. And it's not to everyone's taste or expectation.

But if, like me, you've just come back from Italy and be -ginning to miss it, this is a good place to recapture the mood.

*The Courier's restaurant critic, Mervyn Hecht, has been a consultant to several national food and wine importing companies for the past 22 years.*

TOSCANOVA

10250 Santa Monica Blvd

310-551-0499

[www.toscanova.com](http://www.toscanova.com)

