

Pastrami King Of Merrick Serves Food Fit For A King

By Myrna Fessler, Editor

I decided to visit Pastrami King, 196 Merrick Road in Merrick early on a recent Thursday evening to observe and take a few notes before Ralph met me for dinner. I was greeted by owner, Abe Yamali, and his beautiful wife, Dorothy.

As I entered this fine establishment the retail store wing offered a delectable panacea of tempting aromas, a pleasant assault on our keen senses. Immaculate display cases featured succulent chickens golden brown, bursting with flavorful juices, which Abe mentioned were freshly prepared several times daily, noodle pudding sold by the pound, varieties of knishes, appetizing deli meats of every conceivable description, roast beef and a truly remarkable array of baked desserts which made my mouth uncontrollably moist. Abe's daughter, Alissa, an award-winning baker in her own right, ensures everything from pies to cakes and rich American and European-style desserts are prepared with the best and freshest ingredients. I quickly learned Alissa's efforts are a consistent and popular enticement for the exciting growth already witnessed at Pastrami King.

Prices were far more than I could have 'bargained' for such a high-end eatery and catering merchant. Prices are better than excellent they are remarkably fair for such a fine restaurant. Everything I saw and experienced looked good, smelled good and was good. It's as simple as

that. From a varied and enjoyable children's menu to pure white table linens, this meeting place sparkles and shines with glistening hardwood flooring and attractively displayed works of art.

Magnificent Décor

As we entered one of three spacious dining rooms, we were greeted by hostess/manager, Massiel, who accompanied us to our table. Our waitress, Lynn, arrived and told us about the soup special which was minestrone, prepared and delivered as we considered entrée choices to sample from a sumptuous menu. A busboy brought a warm basket of rye bread and challah, a bowl of cole slaw and perfectly spiced pickles. We carefully perused the menu and noticed a number of over-stuffed sandwiches, gourmet salad selections, and burgers among a host of entrees including rib steak, our personal favorite, which was served with fried potatoes, baby carrots and onion strings for a yummy crunch.

Another simply divine possibility was broiled salmon with lemon and herbs, mashed potatoes and garden vegetables. These were only two delights from devastatingly exciting possibilities. I mentioned to Lynn, our waitress, to bring a small cup of minestrone which was rich and flavorful as were chicken noodle and chicken matzah ball both chuck full of celery, carrots, noodles and thick chicken slices. Matzah balls were fluffy, tasty, perfect.

With the name Pastrami King, Ralph and I

were curious how this traditional staple was prepared. Abe explained it was seasoned and cured on premises like in the old country. It was heaped on a platter and it's the kind of 'fleisch' one must experience to understand and enjoy. Its unique flavoring and perfect coloring enhances and invigorates the total experience. If ever a doctorate in food preparation was available, it would be bestowed on Pastrami King for its world class attention to detail, service and price. The experience for both Ralph and myself was truly overwhelming. We've partaken of fine food in beautiful surroundings before but somehow this was far different. It almost was akin to the way things once were, where old fashioned service and the personal touch meant more than it has become in contemporary times.

The stuffed cabbage was well proportioned and surrounded by tasty gravy, prunes and raisins. A suitable example of gastronomic excellence.

Even though we had crossed that line for total consumption, we couldn't leave Pastrami King without sampling the excellent array of dessert possibilities. The ruglach may have been the best we ever experienced. Cookies, cakes, pies and devilishly provocative baked delicacies were better than the finest one could imagine.

As we left, Abe told us only the freshest quality products are purchased for Pastrami King. Choice cuts and garden fresh are not considerations at this exciting local restaurant. They are dictatorial law!

Considering a forthcoming catered event? This is 'the' place. Be it Bar or Bat Mitzvahs, weddings, corporate or cocktail parties, you'll receive the 'royal' treatment and won't spend a fortune doing it. Call Pastrami King Caterers for specifics.