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Restaurants to try - Rome, Italy



During a trip to Rome in October 2004, Edward F. Nesta and I “discovered” some really outstanding restaurants in Rome, which we added to our repertoire, which we are sure you will want to add to yours.



La Ninfa, located at the **Hotel Majestic Roma**, www.hotelmajestic.com, is a Brasserie, Tea Room and Piano Bar. Bar Manager, Renzo Bettinelli, told us that the hotel was the first hotel on Via Veneto in 1889, and that La Ninfa opened in 1935. He has been with the hotel for 13 years, and is a veritable encyclopedia of history on the hotel as well as Rome, and is also an excellent mixologist. La Ninfa has an intimate clubby atmosphere, where the walls are lined with VIP photographs, and there is live piano music in the evening. Since we were in Rome, we began with Renzo's suggestion of an aperitif of a classic Bellini using Tenuto S. Anna Prosecco, a very aromatic vino spumante with 11.5% alcohol, served with an assortment of freshly baked hot canapés. The hotel makes its own breads and pastries daily to tempt guests. We had a light lunch of Linguine in a lemon, pear and pecorino cheese sauce and Grilled octopus and vegetables. Although we bypassed dessert, we savored espressos and an assortment of miniature cookies and biscotti.

Il Margutta, www.ilmargutta.it, located on Via Margutta, is a vegetarian restaurant that non-vegetarians will also appreciate. The restaurant opened in 1979, and attracts an upscale, artsy crowd. There is an interesting décor inside, but you can also dine outside, which we did to savor the last of the warm autumn nights. A few of the highlights of our dinner included: ‘Robiola tre latte’ which was a cheese with a yellow pear compote served with a small salad and vin cotto sauce, Castelluccia lentil soup with a Swiss chard sformatina, Ravioli ‘dal plin’ with yellow pumpkin, cacao and amaretti, Courgette flowers filled with ricotta and thyme and baked with pachini tomatoes and toasted pine nuts, Gorgonzola with honey served with a glass of Alagna ‘Passerina del Frosinate’ 2001, Millefoglio of maize with Buffalo ricotta and a carponata of winter vegetables with a fresh herb salsa, Red wine short tagliatelle with porcini mushrooms pan-fried with garlic, chili, tomato concasse and parsley, Radicchio, borlatti beans and gorgonzola lasagna with fried sage and a cream of vegetable sauce, Bleu cheese soufflé served with walnuts and pears poached in red wine, and a Tarte Tatin served with vanilla ice cream; proving that vegetarian food doesn't have to mean soy and tofu!

Gran Caffè La Caffettiero, also on Via Margutta, which is an artists' haven, is a perfect old-fashioned coffee house. Sit inside at one of their small tables or at an outdoor table and watch the happenings on Via Margutta. Chocolate lovers will love their hot chocolate with chili. When I saw this on the menu, I thought of the movie, “**Chocolat**” and had to try it. It was hot chocolate with a definite kick and very addicting!

Mangia!

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