



Bellissimo!

61 Osteria is Panther City's newest great dining experience

By Eli Jordan | [@theelijordan](#)

I wouldn't imagine great Italian comes to mind when people think of Fort Worth. But, in the land of Tex-Mex and barbecue, there is a new spot that serves up some of the best Italian the Metroplex has to offer.

61 Osteria sits on 7th street, on the west side of downtown in a gorgeous spot with giant picture windows across the front, giving views of the globe light-covered trees and the 50-foot "Man with a Briefcase" sculpture in neighboring Burnett Park. Everything about the interior of 61 Osteria

is warm, inviting and cozy – from the bar area, which is a more casual atmosphere, to the main dining side of the restaurant, which has comfy round booths and tables that can accommodate larger parties. Every detail provides a relaxed ambiance as you embark on a fabulous dining endeavor. The décor is simply beautiful, with a subtle elegance and understated warmth.

If you are a wine connoisseur, you won't find a better selection than at 61 Osteria. The wine list focuses on various regions of

Italy, including Piedmont, Veneto, Tuscany and Sicily. Wine by the glass or the bottle is available, and the staff is knowledgeable and helpful if you need help choosing what will pair best with your meal. Local craft beers are also available, as well as the usual suspects if you are looking for some suds to accompany your food. If a mixed cocktail is more your speed, then try the Italia Turrata, which is a refreshing combo of Piggyback Rye Whiskey, Don Ciccio e Figli "Cerasum" and Mezcal Blanco. A simple

but delightful Sexy Italian is another house favorite that combines Limoncello Sorbet whipped with Canevel Prosecco.

The food at 61 Osteria is served with the philosophy of "Texas ingredients with an Italian twist." Executive Chef Blaine Stanford takes a modern, but simple and flavorful, approach. Fair warning here, the food is rich, so be mindful, especially if you're ordering pasta, that you don't fill up on appetizers. That is, unless you are willing to take some leftovers home with you.

If you are looking for a simple starter, look no farther than the Rosemary Focaccia. This light, fluffy bread is house-made and served piping hot with house ricotta, rendered nduja, Saba and parmesan butter. If you aren't familiar with nduja, it is a spreadable pork sausage product from the Calabria region of Italy. It eats and has a similar profile to Mexican chorizo. Best plan of

attack is to mix the nduja with some of the ricotta and enjoy them together on a piece of the bread. Saba, which is a syrup made from grapes, has a similar look to balsamic glaze. This is mixed with some olive oil and is perfect for the Focaccia. The Saba has a sweeter profile than a balsamic, which really delights the palate.

There are also some other small portion starters like the Salumi, which is house-cured Calabrian coppa, truffle salami, fennel seed lonza and mortadella. This will satisfy your cured meat craving and get the meal off to a great start.

On the appetizer menu, you will find a couple of Italian food staples like meatballs or wood-grilled prawns. But if you are looking for something a little different, then check out the Blue Fin Tuna Crudo served with horseradish gremolata and crispy farro, or go with the Arancini, which are carnaroli

rice balls stuffed with fontina cheese and then fried golden brown. They come on a bed of house tomato sauce and topped with a little salsa verde for another flavor profile. The melty cheese oozes as you cut the balls in half, and the tomato sauce is fresh with just enough acidity to cut the richness of the fontina. I highly recommend these as the opener if you are looking for something to start your meal off on a great note.

If you are a soup and salad type, then give the White Bean and Kale soup a look. Served with fennel sausage and grilled sourdough, it is a rib-sticking, belly warming delight that will especially play on cool evenings. A Baby Gem Caesar salad and River Valley Farms Bibb salad are also there for your enjoyment to split pre-meal, or for a great lunch option that won't weigh you down.

When it comes to Italian cuisine, to truly be successful, you must get your pasta dishes

YOUR LIFE ▶ AFTER THE ROUND

right, and at 61 Osteria, they do precisely that. Not only are the pasta courses absolutely phenomenal, but they are perfect portions and very affordable given how much you get. In fact, if you go as a couple, avoid the wine, split an appetizer, both order a pasta and split a dessert, I guarantee you can get out for less than \$100, which is a rarity for this caliber of setting and quality of food.

There is a half dozen on-menu pasta dishes offered by Chef Staniford, from simple, like the Bucatini Cacio e Pepe, which translates to cheese and pepper, to more complex, like the Tagliatelle Bolognese, which is more intricate, but equally delicious. The latter is perfectly executed with thin ribbons of pasta with a braised brisket, veal, and pork-based sauce topped with aged parmesan. If you are a sucker for great pasta, I challenge you to find a better pasta dish in the city. It is sublime in every way, and despite its simplicity, eats as a complex dish.

The Smoked Spaghetti Carbonara is another great pasta option, but be warned, this is about as rich a pasta as you will ever try, so you might consider splitting this one,



because after all, Fort Worth is known for its beef. The Bistecca Fiorentina is a porcini and fennel pollen crusted 28oz. prime porterhouse steak. This mammoth cut is meant to be shared, so find a fellow carnivore and dig in to one of the best steaks you will find anywhere.

After your meal, if you have any remaining room, there are several desserts to satisfy your sweet tooth. We sampled the Texas Olive Oil Cake with chestnut honey scented mascarpone, candied citrus and farro crumbles. The cake is fairly dense, but yet still airy with nice flavor and just enough sweetness without being overwhelming. To accompany our cake, we also ordered the gelato, which happened to be salted caramel on the night we were there. The gelato has a smooth, creamier texture than traditional ice cream, and like most of the menu items at 61 Osteria, was rich and packed with incredible flavor.

I must say, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect with a high-end Italian joint in Cowtown, but I was more than satisfied when we headed out the door. The



atmosphere is elegant without being pretentious, the décor is gorgeous and inviting, and the food is downright incredible. It is a place where you could go nuts, wine, dine and spend as much as your heart desires, or you can enjoy a wonderful date night or anniversary dinner while not completely breaking the bank, which makes it a very unique experience. The staff was super friendly, as many of the servers checked in on us throughout the meal to see how we were enjoying

ourselves. The whole atmosphere just feels welcoming. And, let me tell you, I have rarely had a pasta dish like I was served at 61 Osteria. I found myself still thinking about it days later and looking forward to my next visit, which, I can assure you, will be sooner rather than later.

Fort Worth is the town of the cow, but that doesn't mean you can't get top-notch Italian, and 61 Osteria is living proof. Try it out for yourself, and I guarantee you won't be disappointed. **AG**



as it can fill you up quickly. The spaghetti was perfectly prepared with house guanciale, which is cured pork jowl, pecorino Toscano and local egg yolk. The pork jowl was a perfect consistency and the yolk and pecorino work in symphony to create a bite of food you won't soon forget. It's a great option for your night at 61 Osteria.

If you are in the mood for something other than pasta, the main courses on the menu are also brilliantly thought through and just as well prepared by the talented kitchen staff. If a taste of the sea is on your radar, then the Swordfish or the Sea Bass might be up your alley. The swordfish is served with eggplant puree, Castelvetrano olives and puttanesca sauce. The Sea Bass comes with some succulent spinach gnudi Florentina, broccolini, roasted sunchoke and pistachio pesto.

The Veal Chop Marsala came highly recommended from our server, but I was set on a pasta course. We did see it come by on the way to another table, and it looked delightful. The chop is served with hen of the wood mushrooms, grilled baby artichokes and Sperone marsala.

There is one house specialty that I would be remiss if I didn't mention,

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