

Vic's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria: City Market

Ratings:

[Atmosphere: 5/5](#)

[Service: 5/5](#)

[Presentation: 3/5](#)

[Taste: 5/5](#)

[Price: 5/5](#)

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Support Local: Why Vic's Deserves Your Visit

First, a message to all Raleighites: support your local business and restaurants. As I write this in February 2025, it has never been more crucial to rally behind Raleigh's homegrown establishments to prevent further closures. With shifting work habits—more remote and hybrid schedules—[local restaurants are seeing less foot traffic](#) resulting in lost revenue. While Raleigh continues to evolve post-pandemic, preserving its local dining scene remains essential. Vic's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria in City Market certainly fits the bill of a local spot the people of Raleigh would hate to lose, and I am here to tell you exactly why with one reminiscence from last Friday night.

Atmosphere: 5/5

A little insight into the philosophy of this writer: I like to evaluate restaurants based on their own identity rather than holding them to the same standard as fine dining establishments. A 5/5 isn't reserved for white-tablecloth venues with \$100 plates, just as a 1/5 isn't for the local food truck on a side street—it's about a restaurant delivering an exceptional experience within its niche.

So yes, Vic's earns a 5/5 for atmosphere—and nearly every other category—for knowing exactly who they are and executing it to perfection. If you are hoping to go to Vic's for pomp and circumstance then you will not see what you are intended to see, which is a great family business that feels like home. When you enter, the "maitre d" just happens to be the server closest to the door at the time who will give you a warm greeting and check your handwritten reservation from a scrap of paper. No online bookings here.

Your table is set with paper placemats featuring Italian landmarks (the Colosseum is my favorite). Around you, hand-painted murals depict scenes of Italian life. The sound of rapid-fire Italian flows between the kitchen, staff, and even customers, as the aroma of rich tomato sauce fills the air. The ambiance is lively and unpretentious, a stark contrast to the sleek, minimalist dining rooms of modern restaurants.

I mean the details—bread wrapped in tin foil inside a wicker basket, wood-paneled walls, Italian music in the background, and the takeout sign hanging above the bar—add to its old-school charm. Even Vic himself, THE Vic, sits at his designated table near the kitchen, greeting regulars and enjoying fresh pasta. How does this place not score a 5/5?

Service: 5/5

A restaurant in City Market can't survive on charm alone—it needs excellent service. Vic's delivers, and they do it the right way.

Table-sharing models in modern restaurants often frustrate me (my blood pressure is rising just typing about it), as they can lead to lazy staff leaving the work to a few overburdened employees. But Vic's is a family-owned restaurant, which makes all the difference in the world in this writer's opinion.

When you walk into Vic's, you walk into hallowed ground, a place that the staff treats like home because, for many of them, it is. It may be hard to understand this (unless you have known someone who grew up in a restaurant) but whether by blood or by bond, the staff operate like family, moving swiftly through the restaurant, cracking jokes with customers, and working in unison to ensure every table is cared for. The pride they take in their work is palpable, making service here feel personal and genuine.

Presentation: 3/5

This is the one area where Vic's doesn't aim to impress—and that's perfectly fine. You won't find meticulously plated dishes designed for Instagram here. Instead, you'll get generous portions of delicious food, served simply and without pretense.

Vic's is a reminder of an era before restaurants catered to iPhones and social media reels. Instead of trendy neon signs and curated aesthetics, it prioritizes substance over style. The presentation is basic, but that's not why you come here—you come for the flavors.

Taste: 5/5

And those flavors? Outstanding. An easy 5/5—because taste is the most important factor for any successful restaurant and Vic's hasn't thrived for 32 years by accident.

What was ordered:

Complimentary bread for the table



Fried Calamari (served with warm tomato sauce)



Penne Al Funghi Con Pollo (penne with sautéed chicken & mushrooms in a pink cream sauce)



Fettuccine Del Re (Fettuccine with porcini mushrooms, chicken & sweet peas in homemade Alfredo cream sauce) with a Glass of Bex Riesling



Tiramisu for dessert



The Fried Calamari was perfectly crispy and arrived piping hot. Paired with their rich tomato sauce, it's easy to see why it's a top seller.

The Penne Al Funghi Con Pollo had a beautifully balanced flavor. The pink cream sauce was the star, tying together the chicken and mushrooms seamlessly.

The Fettuccine Del Re was outstanding. The Alfredo sauce was creamy and indulgent, the chicken plentiful, and the sweet peas added a subtle contrast that rounded out the dish. If you can imagine the perfect creamy Alfredo, this is it.

The Tiramisu was a generous portion for the price and a flawless way to end the meal—rich, but not too heavy.

At a family-run Italian spot, you expect bold, authentic flavors, and Vic's delivers with every bite.

Price: 5/5

For what was ordered—an appetizer, a soda, a glass of wine, two entrées, and dessert—the total came out to under \$80 before tax. That's an unbeatable price for a full-service meal in City Market on a weekend.

For comparison, City Market Sushi down the street charges an average of \$11.50 per appetizer, \$16.45 per sushi roll (and who orders just one?), \$9 for dessert, and \$11+ for wine or sake. A comparable meal for two would be around \$100 before tax, and you'd likely leave less full. If you're dining in City Market, you won't find a better deal than Vic's.

Final Thoughts:

If you value great service, incredible food, and a warm, inviting atmosphere, then Vic's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria should be at the top of your list. Raleighites, if we care about preserving our city's unique culinary landscape, we need to support the places that make it special. Vic's is one of those places. This writer certainly intends to keep coming back.