

A GUIDE TO FOOD AND SAVINGS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR LOCAL INDEPENDENT RESTAURANTS



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Delicious Pizza, Flavorful Pasta, and Much More at

Pizza N' Pasta in Manville

By Michael Vandenberg

Hearty pasta and pizzeria pies. A warm, comfortable dining room and a fully equipped bar. Everything you want on one menu, all rich in taste, and at a fair price. I used to think those combinations were not possible without sacrificing one idea or the other. But at Pizza N' Pasta, all of those things came true.

These qualities make it ideal for meetings with your organization, watching the game with old friends, or going on a date night with your significant other, which is exactly what I did. We walked in and admired the bar room, and then marveled at the seamless transition to the fine dining room as the host walked us to our seats. They were soft and the table was candle-lit.

My only complaint about the menu was that picking one meal out of such a large list of mouthwatering choices was somewhat of a challenge. Indeed, Pizza N' Pasta offers a huge variety of meal categories: Pizza (a "Classic" list of options and Create Your Own), Calzones & Stromboli's, Homemade and Specialty Pasta, Veal, Chicken, Seafood, Eggplant, and even Steaks and Burgers. Not to mention plenty of desserts and appetizers.

Speaking of which, there are 24 options to choose from to start your visit off right, not including soup and salad. Maybe you'll want to try the Hot Crab Dip, or possibly the Pizza and Pasta Sampler for only \$9.95! We ended up going with the Mozzarella Garlic Bread, which was toasted to perfection with great cheese on top for just \$4.25. It was plenty for two people.

For our main courses, we opted for meals from Pizza N' Pasta's namesake categories. In those especially, the restaurant does not disappoint. Pizza can be ordered in both small size, a personal order, or large, which is big enough to be shared. Some unique options available include Barbeque Chicken Pizza and Shrimp Pesto Pizza. But if you're not that experimental, Pizza N' Pasta provides their signature Traditional Cheese Pizza. My girlfriend opted to take that pie over to the Create Your Own section of the menu and add extra cheese and fresh garlic. I assure you this personal-size pizza looked and tasted nothing like the factory personal pizzas in a pan over at the competition. This pizza was well-made with fresh ingredients, cooked with the same care as a multi-layer pasta dish. The dough was soft and the cheese was rich in texture. Expecting garlic thrown on top, we were pleasantly surprised to find the garlic actually cooked into the pizza. This combined with the rest of the ingredients to make a quality pie in all phases.

I stuck with pasta and again, there were so many dishes to choose from. The Homemade section includes Fettuccine Sicilian, Gnocchi Asiago, and even a filling Lasagna. Opting for an even more adventurous route, I explored the Specialty Pasta section and found something that tasted just as good as it sounded: Gina's Tri-Color Cheese Tortellini. It was "tossed with chopped spinach, roasted peppers and onions in a brown sauce," which all served as complements to the tortellini without masking it either. Pizza N' Pasta clearly takes pride in these signature dishes, this one containing an ample amount of tortellini, with plenty of each of the three flavors, all of which had their own, distinct taste. The dish was topped off with smooth gravy, just enough to add taste without soaking it.

Afterwards, we decided to finish off the experience with something sweet. Unsurprisingly, the dessert section lives up to the rest of the menu's flawless reputation. While we thought about indulging in the Snickers Pie or Chocolate Outrage, we set our sights on the Homemade Chocolate Mouse. This too was delicious, with a soft and creamy texture, nice chocolate taste, and "garnished with whipped cream".

Overall, we had more than enough delicious, quality food in all stages of our meal, for a fair price. I recommend Pizza N' Pasta to anyone looking for a change of pace from the same old national chain restaurants.

Pizza N' Pasta is located at 930 South Main Street, Manville, NJ and open 11:30-9 Monday-Thursday, 11:30-10 Friday and Saturday, and 12-9 on Sunday. The bar is often open later and Happy Hour is every day from 4 to 6. You can call them at 908-725-5522 to make a reservation or visit them at their website at pizzapastanj.com. So stop in as soon as you can to have a quality meal in a cozy setting.



GABRIELES BAR & GRILLES Great Variety at a Great Price

By Michael Vandenberg

Perhaps the best thing about Gabrieles Bar & Grill is that it's hard to categorize. Is it a family restaurant or a sports bar? Does it have a classy banquet room complete with an in-wall fish tank, or is it open to the general public? Is the food Italian, American, Asian, or Mexican? The answer: All of the above.

The current owner is Anthony, who, with his father, bought the old Bazooka's and renamed it Gabrieles. The new name signified a change in tone for the restaurant to something more interesting and unique. "I wanted to make it a different atmosphere here," said Anthony. When his father got sick, Anthony kept going, working to add more and more features to make Gabrieles the powerhouse it is today.

And on features, the restaurant does not disappoint. The dining room is large with enough tables to serve a ton of people, yet there's plenty of room to walk around. The seats are comfortable and the speakers play a fun collection of current pop hits.

But if you just want to come in for a drink, Gabrieles has you covered. The bar is probably twice as large as one at a chain restaurant. And with almost 50 televisions on the premises, why not come here to watch the game with your friends? Or for the price of a couple beers, watch that otherwise expensive pay-per-view boxing match everyone's hyped for. You won't ever have to worry about overstaying your welcome either; at Gabriele's, you're not just another dollar on the assembly line of corporate dining. "You're not rushed to leave here," said Anthony. "Stay, have a meal, and enjoy yourself."

When you look at the menu, you'll find plenty to enjoy. For an appetizer, you might want to try the wings, which are celebrated by routine customers as being the best around. Or how could you go wrong with the quesadillas, "prepared the authentic Mexican way"?

The list of entrée categories is impressive: Crisp & Fresh Salads, Sandwiches, Gabrieles' Ultimate Burgers, Pasta & Seafood, Sizzling Fajitas and Steaks, Specialties (like the Chicken Saltimbocca and Tilapia Duo!), Stromboli, and Pizza. Where else can you get the Baked Stuffed Shells, your significant other get a pizza, your friend get the Chicken Fajitas, your Dad get the American Rib Eye Sandwich, your Mom get the Grilled Salmon Salad, and your sibling get the Oriental Steak? Only at Gabrieles.

If you're looking to have a party, look no further. Gabrieles has a huge private dining room almost as large as the public one, complete with relaxed lighting and its own bar. While you're sitting at the bar during your next birthday bash, feel free to gaze upon the beautiful fish tank in the wall above the high-quality drink selections.

So stop by soon to catch live performances by The Nerds and The Benjamins, and remember to come enjoy the fresh air at the seasonal Tiki Bar. Be sure to check www.gabrielesbarandgrill.com for more upcoming events or call them at 732-981-1234. Gabrieles Bar & Grill is located at 1351 Centennial Avenue in Piscataway and opens at 11:30 AM Monday to Saturday and noon on Sunday.

Eat, Drink, and Laugh at Rolf's Restaurant & Pub

By Michael Vandenberg

Those three words serve as the motto for this restaurant, and they are quite fitting. At Rolf's, an authentic German and American eatery in Warren, it's effortless to enjoy all the unique amenities in a quality local setting.

Rolf's has been family owned for 27 years now, built by Rolf himself in 1986. The restaurant quickly made a name for itself throughout the local area and has been a success ever since. It is now owned by Andrew, Rolf's son, and managed by Tim Preston, who talks fondly about the restaurant's true embodiment of its motto.

Although a smaller business than the big chain restaurants, Rolf's is a full service operation. There are about 25 employees ready to serve long-time customers, new people looking to give it a try, and more. For instance, the restaurant that embraces its German heritage naturally goes all-out for Oktoberfest by having a "beer garden" tent in the parking lot every weekend from mid-September to the end of October. But if you're looking to have a more private gathering, they have a large banquet room in the back of the building where they frequently host, for example, birthday parties and corporate meetings.

No matter what your reason for coming, you'll no doubt be treating yourself to American food done right or perfect authentic German cuisine, a rarity for Central Jersey. Rolf himself, now retired, recently stopped by and helped revamp the menu to ensure the German section is well made. Maybe you'll want the Kartoffelpuffer (Three potato & onion pancakes with sour cream and apple sauce) as an appetizer and then feast on the Rolf's Schnitzel (Tender breaded cutlet lightly browned and topped with gravy, served with spaetzle and red cabbage) for your main course!

If you're not into German food however, it's not a problem. The selection of classic American food at Rolf's is vast and often contains delicious twists. Why not try the salmon, which is topped with fresh salsa and served on a bed of rice? Tim points out that his favorite meal here is the ribs. "Our ribs are better than any other ribs I've ever had. I can pull the bone right out with my fingers and just eat the meat with a knife and fork. They're slow cooked," so they just fall right off the bone. But of course no German/American menu would really be complete without a

mouthwatering selection of hamburgers. I tried the Ruthless Burger during my visit. The description reads, "10oz Burger stuffed and topped with bacon and colbyjack cheese". Yes, stuffed and topped. "We actually stuff cheese and bacon between the patty meat, and then cook it with those things right in the middle of it," Tim explained. Then additional bacon and cheese is thrown on the top.

While you're enjoying the food, you'll love the fun, close-knit atmosphere at Rolf's. There's music in the background and multiple sections of their large dining room. Go ahead and play some foosball or pool over by the bar, which is where I found regulars conversing with the bartender like they're friends. But hey, at a place like Rolf's, they probably are. Tim was happy to show me around their spotless kitchen, where I met some of the chefs. You don't have to be a people-person to be a chef, but these ones were happy to talk to me about the food and even joke around about their walk-in freezer with a poster of Christopher Walken on the door (their "Christopher Walk-in").

So come by on Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, March Madness, or any other special holiday; Rolf's will always have some type of celebration going on. There are also trivia nights every Thursday and local bands that pack the house on weekends. And of course, don't forget Oktoberfest in the fall.

Rolf's Restaurant and Pub is located at 65 Stirling Road in Warren and opens at 11:30 AM every day. Call 908-754-5500 to make a reservation or visit their website at www.rolfsrestaurantnj.com. Come up to Rolf's today to eat, drink, and laugh!



