

Sarti

– try this on for size

Justine Copely

Only ten weeks old, Sarti has already made quite an impression on the Melbourne food scene. Located in Russell Place, just next to Gin Palace, it combines the finest of the Italian kitchen with the finest of bespoke tailoring. Novel approach, but one that seems to work.

Bespoke Tailor Celia Coates, formerly of Georges, has created a very classy establishment. Securing the talents of Chef Sylvania Palmira, the darling matriach of Italian cuisine, and restaurant consultant and Vogue food writer Louise Lechte, the i's have been dotted and the t's well and truly crossed.

I started off with a delightfully delicate tortellini in brodo. The broth was perfectly clear and light. Resist the temptation to add pepper because it is perfect by itself. The chicken tortellini was perfectly cooked and had only the slightest hint of seasoning. My guest had the carciofi e fave, artichoke with beans, with a slight vinaigrette which balanced the twang of the artichoke perfectly.

The list of entrees is varied and well balanced. As is the case with primi, it is mainly pasta based. Prawn risotto, trenette al pesto, rigatoni al ragu di carne (meat sauce) and tagliolini al salmone, along with the aforementioned broth and artichoke dishes.

For main I had the pan fried eye fillet with a barolo wine sauce. The fillet was AAA grade beef and cooked to absolute perfection. My guest had capretto, or kid, done osso bucco style which was delightful. Both serves were very generous and were accompanied by small serves of spinach and baked mash to balance the meal. I normally

steer away from meat when eating Italian as I find the flavours and sauces can be overwhelmingly rich. Not in this case though. There's a delightful understated elegance in Sylvania's cooking.

Desserts are sublime. Torta di marscapone, which looks a lot like tira mi su, Sicilian apple cake, chocolate and walnut torte, poached pears with zabaglione, and ice cream drowned in coffee and liqueur. We didn't have any room for dessert so you'll have to try that for yourself.

The service was friendly, fast and efficient. Not a hint of attitude. The wine list is brief but features some good quality wines. More simplicity.

For those who just want a quick bite to ward off liver obliteration, Sarti also serves food from the bar. Antipasto, grilled sandwiches, mushroom pizza, beef pie, spinach and ricotta crepe, priced between \$8-\$12.

In terms of pricing, Sarti is not at the cheaper end of the scale but you are definitely getting what you pay for. Entrees are between \$12-\$15, mains \$16-\$24 and desserts \$8-\$12. With a delightful outdoor garden terrace that can accommodate large groups, it makes the perfect location for a Christmas lunch.

In terms of the tailoring angle, Celia is offering a full bespoke tailoring service for both men and women. They also provide a made-to-order service where their Cornelian label is custom fitted to your own measurements.