

BUDGET-PRICE ITALIAN

COMMENDABLE things about **La Scatolina**, a new Greenwich Village Italian restaurant, are the neighborhood, **Restaurant Report**

which is colorful, the service, which is generally good, and the modest price of the food, which is a trifle uneven, but palatable. The place is classic rustic, bare wood tables, beamed ceiling and dark lighting.

The menu shows more imagination than that of

many of its counterparts. It lists some excellent al dente pasta like herb sauced rigatoni enriched with craggy ground sausage, an ultra-huge lamb chop seductively seasoned, flavorsome filet of Tuscan Orata, a white fish balanced by delicately sauced calamari and veal shank with fluffy mashed potatoes.

Avoid nefariously dreadful homemade focaccia. Instead munch on tastefully fresh giant rolls. Slightly overcooked spaghetti is saved by an exceptionally

Sheldon Landwehr



well-spiced Bolognese sauce. Scrawny asparagus are like chewing ropes and just as savory. Made on the premises desserts are excellent. **★★ La Scatolina, 418 Sixth Av., N.Y. (212) 475-0555. Same L-D menu daily. Entrees \$10-\$22. Sun. Brunch. Acc. res., maj. cc.**

IF ANYONE WISHES TO capture the atmosphere and authentic feeling of a well-received Italian-Mediterranean restaurant, they need go no further than **East River Cafe**. It has all the romanticism, from shockingly dim lighting to active bar turning out powerful libations to white clothed tables to aproned waiters to peachy mirrors and pictures.

The restaurant incorporates such faults as commonplace bread and melted butter, filet mignon served luke-warm, a lamb chop not even close to the menu description, and some limp, over-broiled vegetables. But the food, otherwise, is good at affordable prices.

Dishes deserving your attention include seafood soup floating shrimp, scallops, clams and mussels, creamy fresh mozzarella tomato salad, stellar pastas, and potato crusted salmon steak with Dijon mustard.

★★ East River Cafe, 1111 First Ave. (61 St.), N.Y. (212) 980-3144. L-D daily. Din. entrees \$12-\$24.

Scoops: Now that the social season is upon us, **Baldwin Formals** (W. 56 St.) has its hands full filling star-studded requests for their black tie originals....Dr. Mark Lazare (E. 74 St.), dentist to NYC's VIP's, gives the kind of service we mortals can only dream about.

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WHAT THE ★★★ MEAN

- 0- Farkackt (Beneath contempt)
- 1- Unremarkable but acceptable
- 2- Good
- 3- Very good
- 4- Outstanding

FOR THE RECORD

Restaurant reviews in this column are in no way paid advertising. Restaurants are selected at Landwehr's sole discretion and praised or panned accordingly. Feedback is welcome. Write Landwehr at 823 11th Ave., NY 10019 or call (212) 956-1882 or check-out his web site @www.Sheldon_Landwehr.com; Email Sheldon@_Sheldonlandwehr.com.

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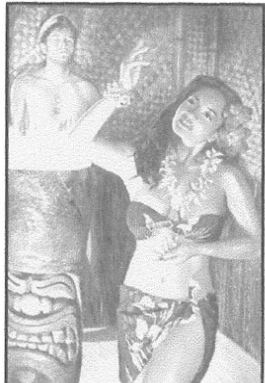
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