

# True Italian Papa's Café, a legend in the making

In Kuta, Bali, there is a restaurant that has gained a reputation in Japan and Australia for serving authentic Italian food alfresco. The grapevine also has it that Papa's Café is "frequented by hotel general managers, food and beverage managers and chefs".

So we thought we'd better check out this legend in the making.

**Location:** From Kuta Square, follow the one-way street left, past the Hard Rock Hotel and Café and McDonald's on Jl. Pantai Kuta.

Papa's Café is located just before the road turns right into Legian. You can't miss it — it's a reddish-brown two-story building with seating that spills out of its wide open doors.

**Looks:** Papa's is very Mediterranean, with terracotta tiles and brown and green walls built in an art deco style.

Taking pride of place in

the restaurant is the coffee machine. According to Numzio Gumina, the managing director, a good restaurant is measured by how good the coffee is — no matter how good the food has been. As though to make the point, Papa's has 20 ways of serving up coffee with names from letter A to V.

## Megan Dout

Contributor  
Kuta

**What's it got:** It's got ambience; created primarily by its seafront location and architecture. Sitting on the terrace with the wind blowing in our faces, we were reminded of our holiday in the south of France.

It's got good service. The waiters and waitresses were friendly, attentive and knowledgeable.

It's got great coffee. The

expresso, for example, has a foam-light layer which will not go away no matter how you much you stir the coffee. It is purported to be the oil of the coffee beans which is extracted when processed correctly.

**Taste factor:** In Italian cuisine, there are many courses. It is not clear-cut what an entrée is and what a main course is. Often a course can be served as an entrée or in a larger portion as a main course. Hence we chose the popular dishes and whatever took our fancy, without paying too much attention to which category a dish fell into.

**Fetta di Salmone Affumicato** is Tasmanian smoked salmon stacked with rosti potatoes and drizzled with a creamy sauce. The fried potatoes provided a very crispy texture and flavor to the dish.

The Sizzling Garlic King Prawns was prepared the traditional way, pan-fried in

oil without any condiments and served in a little deep black bowl. The six prawns were juicy and we were able to savor their natural flavors.

**Crespelle al frutti di Mare** is oven-baked Italian crepes stuffed with mixed seafood, mozzarella, Parmesan cheese and sauce. It tasted very much like a seafood lasagna. We found the dish rather heavy for a starter.

The Chilly Mussels, on the other hand, was light and refreshing. It is not on the menu but is available if you ask for it. It is not spicy at all. We soaked up the delicious red sauce with garlic bread.

The most popular pizza is the Margherita. However we decided to go for *Capriciosa*, which is really a Margherita topped with beef salami. The crust was thin and crispy and there were just enough toppings on it for a good pizza.

For the meats we ordered Papa's Duo, which is the

house's version of Surf and Turf. It consisted of pan-fried beef and chicken steaks. The chicken was covered in a plain creamy sauce while the beef was covered in a creamy mushroom sauce. The latter was a trifle salty but the beef was tender and cooked medium-rare, as we had ordered.

The tiramisu is Mrs. Gumina's secret recipe. It was light enough to be enjoyed with coffee after the heavy meal.

**Price points:** We felt the food was reasonably priced. Appetizers range from Rp 8,000 for bruschetta alla romana (garlic bread topped with tomato, basil, and extra virgin olive oil) to Rp 58,000 for Sizzling Garlic King Prawns.

Salads cost around Rp 27,000 and pasta costs around Rp 45,000 for an entrée plus Rp 5,000 more for a main course.

Meat dishes average Rp 75,000 and desserts Rp 15,000.

Papa's Premium Chardonnay will set you back by Rp 32,000 a glass or Rp 150,000 per bottle.

**Minus points:** Although it's got soft piped-in music, we felt that a minstrel quartet singing contemporary Italian songs would have completed the delightful Mediterranean experience.

**Verdict:** If you are looking for pizza topped with Peking duck or pizza piled with stuff, you won't find it at Papa's. This is because Papa's serves real Italian food. Pizzas are served the way Italians make them

back home — simple and unadulterated with "exotic" ingredients.

That doesn't mean that Papa's menu is uncreative. In fact, there are a number of creations — all of the items which are named "Papa's ..." are the restaurant's own inventions. And according to the staff, they also happen to be the most popular items.

Papa's Cafe  
Jl. Pantai Kuta Legian Bali  
Tel: (62) 361 - 755055  
Major credit cards accepted

