

A Taste of Long Island



Villa Formia

136 Mott St., Madison Shopping Center, Oceanside

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www.villaformia.com

Where do Italian food lovers go for the best homemade fare on the South Shore? Simply drive down to the Madison Plaza Shopping Center on Mott Street and you'll discover one of Oceanside's best hidden gems — Villa Formia.

Venture inside the restaurant's kitchen and you'll find owners and brothers, Rob and Marcello Veltri, cooking up Old World specialties and family favorites from their native Italy. Named after Formia, a small village on the outskirts of Rome, the restaurant has provided tasteful dishes to customers since 1986.

For many of its patrons, the eatery's bright and cozy dining room is a home away from home. Our server, Lisa, graciously started our meal off with some fresh homemade Garlic Knots. We reveled in a dish of Baked Clams right out of the oven, made with whole baked littleneck clams, garlic, olive oil and topped with breadcrumbs.

Next out was a fresh Caesar Salad with just the right amount of dressing. Other starters include a selection of five soups made from scratch; Mussels Marinara; Hot Antipasto, with shrimp; Baked Clams; Eggplant Rollatini; Stuffed Mushrooms with marinara sauce; and the Buffalo Wings served with blue cheese dressing, celery and carrots.

Every Italian establishment serves pasta, but the Penne Alla Vodka here steals the show with its velvety sauce. Other top choices include the Ravioli Rosa, cheese stuffed ravioli served in a pink sauce; Pasta and Vegetables, with assorted vegetables sautéed in garlic and oil; and baked items such as the Baked



Ziti Sicilianai with ricotta, eggplant, mozzarella and tomato sauce.

If you come for no other dish, make it the mouthwatering Chicken Scarpariello, with its crisp pieces of chicken on the bone roasted with garlic. The legendary dish takes about 30 to 40 minutes to prepare, but let me assure you it's well worth the wait. We had ours topped with sausage, roasted peppers, broccoli, mushrooms, onions and green peppers.

Alongside Villa Formia's dining room is its busy pizzeria, where you'll find popular slices such as the Neapolitan and Sicilian, Specialty Pies, Rolls, Calzones and Heroes. Picking only one slice may be hard but one customer comes three times a week from Merrick for the Stingione Pie, made with an authentic crunchy Sicilian crust and topped with plum tomatoes, sautéed onions and anchovies. Another must-have is the Chicken Caesar Pie, made with fresh Romaine lettuce and sliced chicken cutlet topped with a creamy Caesar dressing.

If you can fit in something sweet after your meal, don't walk out the door without trying one of the house's creamy Cannolis. Marcello makes the homemade cannoli cream, mixed with chocolate chips, by hand and you just can't find anything like it around.

Serving wine and beer, Villa Formia additionally offers on- and off-premise catering, a take-out menu and delivery services to as far as Long Beach.

— By *Melissa Argueta*

