



Marola's Trattoria

By Charles Marcanetti

I give up! There are so many truly wonderful Italian restaurants in our area, I'm running out of adjectives. Recently, I had the privilege of meeting a restaurateur who loves serving his guests. He actually enjoys walking among his customers and talking about everything...even his delicious food. Guy (pronounced in the French mode as Gee) Penniello welcomed us with an effusiveness which, when combined with his natural cherubic demeanor, made us feel as if we were entering his home. **Marola's Trattoria, located at 929 N. University Dr., Coral Springs (954-796-0544)**, is a simply designed eatery allowing patrons to relax and be comfortable in a neighborhood establishment that makes couples feel intimate and families feel mellow. Guy told us his specialty is fish. I disagree. The fish dishes were magnificent. But, the meat dishes were equally enjoyable.

We started with **Fried Calamari**. I have stopped rating calamari because, for the most part, calamari is calamari. Right? Wrong! In fact, I didn't even order it. Guy said we should try it and we did. Guy has found a recipe that keeps the batter very light and allows the Squid to remain crisp and sweet. We also had the **Stuffed Artichokes**, which were not prepared like any other stuffed artichokes I've had. Of course, the garlic,

stuffing and olive oil is standard fare, but the perfect cooking and presentation raised this treat above the competition. The **Caesar Salad** was satisfactorily "wet", fresh and just appetite teasing enough to make us want our next course.

I found Lisa, our waitperson, and Sergio, her assistant, to be attentive and professional. They brought out each course at just the right time. Which begs the question, "Just what is the right time?" In our case, it's one after the other for each course. As an example, each appetizer follows each appetizer...then a pause for palate restoration...and the main courses, etc. We do it like this because we share and I need to sample each dish.

Our next appetizer was the **Caprese**, consisting of fresh mozzarella, tomatoes and basil with fresh roasted peppers which, when enjoyed with the **Caponata** (eggplant prepared much like French Tapenade) and **Garlic Bread**, really brought us to a high sense of expectation for the soon-to-be main feast.

We started this course with **Shrimp Scampi** served with **Angel Hair Primavera**. It was succulent. But, the **Lobster Ravioli** was astounding. The **Salmon with Clams** was the sweetest, softest salmon I've had in a very long time and I recommend it without hesitation for all salmon lovers. In Europe, one of the real treats families enjoy is sole. It's somewhat less popular in the States but if Marola's was the bellwether, everyone would be eating it. This night, we loved it with linguini.

As I said, the meat dishes were wonderful, and among them are Marola's **Famous Veal Chops**. I engaged Guy in a rather lengthy conversation about seeking out farm-raised or free-roaming veal suppliers, because I'd prefer knowing that the animals were raised humanely. I believe he will make the effort.

Our evening was capped-off with **Fruit Tarts, NY Style Cheesecake, Italian Cheesecake** and **Cannoli**. These treats were delicious and, as an ending to an enjoyable experience, it leaves one with a desire to return. I will.

