

Baltimore

MAGAZINE

Flamboyant Italian fare finds a home in Timonium via LIBERATORE's Ristorante.

The murals say it all: Cornucopias spill over with fruit; cherubs cavort amidst the abundance. That's the feeling of Liberatore's Ristorante and its slightly more casual sister, Liberatore's Bistro. The menu is straightforward, but the spirit is generous and the food well prepared. Dreamy carpaccio, its excellent beef awash in capers and Parmesan, surrounds luscious caponata. Grilled eggplant and veal offer simple elegance, but a more robust choice is the rollatini spirals of pasta rolled around ricotta laced with prosciutto and sausage.



Why go: A richly accented waiter will call you "my darling lady" and you'll somehow be flattered (provided, of course, that you are a woman).

While you're there: Listen up when your waiter instructs you in the finer points of Chianti – the '96 Tunuta Santedame Classico was superb.

If we had to choose between these two siblings (had to, mind you) we'd go for Liberatore's Bistro. But it's not because the cooking's any better. Both places dish up thoroughly enjoyable Italian specialties; both offer adorable paintings of winged putti to attend your repast. But at the bistro you can dine underneath a trellis beside a lovely mural that makes you dream, just for an instant, of the Tuscan countryside. That's worth the trip alone.



Do: Check out the delish "wedding soup": salty, but good.

Don't: Despair when you realize the bistro is in a strip mall; just step through the door and enter the illusion.

Photos from *Baltimore Magazine* (1998 and '99 75 Best Restaurants issues.)