

## ORDER UP

Village Pizzeria home to so much more!

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About 10 miles west of Saratoga Springs on Route 29 sits an old house turned restaurant named Village Pizzeria. And many of the folks who live in the nearby rural towns of Galway, Broadalbin and Milton will tell you it's the home of the best pizza around. My husband will tell you the pizza's so good, you'll regret it.

On a recent Saturday evening, Paul and I went in for pizza but the assortment of Italian dinners was too much for my husband to resist.

"I'm thinking about the sampler, or the chicken parm," he said. "What are you going to get?"

"The sampler does look good..." I said.

"Great. You get the sampler, I'll get the chicken parm."

When our server arrived he ordered chicken Parmesan (\$13.95) and a pizza, to go. "It'll be good for lunch tomorrow," he reasoned.

Plied with a basket of Village's homemade Italian bread and some fruity olive oil for dipping, we watched a steady stream of customers file in. Some were led to an upstairs dining room while others passed our table on their way outside. There's a large, tented dining area behind the building that's frequently used for private parties and a few tables on a patio secluded by shrubbery. Between the patio and the parking lot lies a bocce court shaded by an arbor of grape vines.

I've never actually seen anyone playing bocce there, but most people come dressed for it, in shorts and T-shirts.

Dinners come with a tossed salad, the usual mix of lettuce, tomato, cucumber and onion. Although unexciting, the ingredients were crisp and fresh and we cleaned our plates.

The restaurant filled, and it appeared the kitchen couldn't keep up. A busser came by and checked us twice after clearing our salad plates, our server brought us more sodas and said our dinners would be out "soon."

They came soon enough, two plates the size of wheel covers, piled high with food covered in red sauce. On Paul's plate the sauce hid three large pieces of chicken breast, breaded and fried to a golden brown and topped with molten mozzarella. My sampler platter (\$14.95) contained a large Florentine shell stuffed with a spinach and cheese mixture, a stuffed manicotti, two stuffed eggplant rollatini and two more pieces of chicken Parmesan.

Well prepared down to the last detail, there wasn't a thing on either plate that either of us didn't like. I especially like the sauce; instead of being dark and sweet, it's a bright tomato sauce with enough acidity to taste fresh.

I ate as much as I could before handing my plate off to Paul, who finished mine as well as his own. With a large pizza boxed and ready, we decided dessert would be overkill on this trip, but as I remember from previous visits, the tiramisu is quite good. They also offer cannolis, cheesecake, spumoni, Italian ices and an assortment of cakes.

Later that night, Paul crawled into bed, moaning.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Oh, that pizza's really good - but I shouldn't have had so much to eat."

"You ate the pizza too?"

"Not all of it, just a few slices. Enough to regret it the rest of the night."