

Issue #38 - December 11, 2009
Restaurant Review: The Roadhouse

By David Lion Rattiner

I have found pizza heaven. I never thought I'd ever say anything like that, but I have found the pizza mecca. The holy grail of pizza. The pizza of youth.

After eating the pizza at the Roadhouse in Riverhead, I feel like I have just discovered the secret to pure, unadulterated happiness.

Logically named The Roadhouse, since it is located right on the side of the road, this pizza place is so good it will bring you to near tears. Owned and operated by Chuck Herman and Janet Greco, The Roadhouse offers brick oven pizza and other wonderful Italian dishes in a setting that is in its own league.

Walking into the Roadhouse is like walking into a pizza place painting done by Norman Rockwell after he just finished eating dinner with Frank Sinatra, whose music by the way is almost always on inside the restaurant. The art on the walls consists of old-world New York and there are plenty of tributes to America everywhere.

The Roadhouse is your average, loveable pizza place, but it is done so well, it can be compared to fine dining. You can bring a date here, you can bring your family here, you can celebrate an anniversary here. The extensive menu offers classic pizzas and heros as well as a fabulous array of pasta choices and salads. At the Roadhouse, you can be treated to a waitress or get your pizza to go. The elevated tables allow you to look down into the brick oven as the chefs whip dough into the air.

I'm somewhat of a pizza connoisseur, so I gave a regular cheese slice my first test. I have to tell you, this pizza nearly changed my life. It was so unbelievably good I couldn't deal with it. The cheese was melted perfectly, not falling off the dough and was still hot. And the dough! Whatever they are putting in it makes it so soft and perfect that you just sit back and have to breathe for a moment.

All of the pizza is cooked in a large brick oven that when you look at it, gives off the same feeling you get when you see an old-fashioned steam engine train rumbling down the tracks. This is an old-fashioned place that's real, and there simply aren't enough places like this in the world.

Like any pizza place, much of the quality of the pizza depends on the dough, and here they get it right. I tried a piping hot chicken roll wrapped in mozzarella cheese and a marinara dipping sauce that was incredible.

Everything on the menu here is reasonably priced. Calzones are just \$6.95 and a large Neapolitan pie is just \$14.95. You get the unbelievably high quality here, but you also don't have to worry about your wallet.

Ravioli or stuffed shells with sauce is just \$8.95 and a chicken parm, which can be grilled or deep-fried depending on what you prefer, comes with pasta or salad for \$12.95.

If you are looking to stay away from carbs, there are plenty of options at The Roadhouse. The array of salad choices supasses most pizza places that you've ever been to. There are the standards Gorgonzola salads and the caesar salads, but there is also a fabulous antipasto plate with a large selection of meat and cheeses that is other-worldly. You can also get a great Italian chef salad and, of course, a sensational fresh mozzarella with tomato and basil salad.

If you can still manage to eat dessert, you must give a cannoli here a try. They are perfect. Other highlights here are the cheesecakes, which are, again, just perfect.

You have to go see the inside of The Roadhouse for yourself. It is worth a trip to Riverhead. They offer plenty of beer and wine options to go with your meal and when I was there, I literally didn't want to leave. There is so much charm and life happening here you can't help but observe. The chefs all have personalities and laugh while they work, while the waitresses and waiters take care of everybody with smiles.

I can't recommend this place enough. It's exactly what it should be and the quality of the food is remarkable. If you live in Riverhead, you already know, but if you've never been, make this a place to visit. You won't regret it.

The Roadhouse is located at 1111 W. Main Street in Riverhead. They can be reached at 631-208-9888.