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SEARCHING FOR SINCERITY

Georgina Young-Ellis and Jonathan Ellis explore the world outside of corporate, mall driven, falsely smiling sales forces - to find local places intent on customer service, customer satisfaction and a pleasurable customer experience - all driven by, you guessed it... sincerity. With a shout-out to Linus for inspiring us all with his search for the most sincere pumpkin patch...

[Home](#)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2013

Basil Brick Oven Pizza

Jon and I were among the lucky few to be invited to the rebirth of Basil Brick Oven Pizza's menu: a night for food bloggers and critics to sample the delights that Chef Daniele Barbos of Piemonte, Italy has recently dreamed up. We love discovering new (or old) places in our Astoria neighborhood, especially if they're within walking distance, but Basil is known as a destination for diners from far and wide. Two blocks off the N or Q train, at Astoria Blvd in Queens, those hungering for the best, authentic pizzas and reasonably priced, gourmet Italian fare come from every borough in New York...and beyond.

For some reason, on the night of the tasting event, we decided to sit apart from the communal table where most of the food writers were gathered - and by doing so were rewarded with being joined by Joe Giannola, one of the owners, and his nephew, Vito, though throughout the night, many members of the Giannola family came by to say hello and make sure our every need was being met. It certainly was. I want to say we merely "tasted" Daniele's newest creations, as well as some of his standards, but the fact is, we were served full portions of everything, so that by the time we got to the main course meats, I could barely move, much less taste. But I want you to know, I gave it my darnedest - everything from the appetizers, including the freshest octopus carpaccio on a bed of lemony arugula, and the fat, juicy clams swimming in a sea of redolent white wine sauce, to the first courses: green lasagna made with pesto, homemade mozzarella, potatoes and bechamel sauce, delicious lobster ravioli, an inventive risotto with speck (a kind of gourmet dried ham), radicchio and mascarpone, and one with asparagus, mushrooms and seafood; and finally, salmon, rack of lamb, and pork medallions - juicy and perfectly cooked with all kinds of delectable garnishes and side dishes. The legendary pizzas were to be served after that, but with not an ounce of room left in my belly, I had to pass, and instead went home loaded down with leftovers and lots of hugs and kisses from the Giannolas, Daniele, and even our wait staff.

Yes, they were conscientious of us being food writers, especially because I was doing double-duty that night, being on assignment for the Queens Gazette Newspaper. But by the accounts of others that have delved into the delights of Basil, the family that makes up everything from owners to bussers is always like that. The food is always exceptional and you always feel like you fit right in with *la famiglia*. On this blog, we're never paid or bribed to say nice things about any business we visit. Yet, though we were fed for free, the sincerity was so palpable at Basil, I have no choice but to declare it: ***Extraordinarily sincere!***

Basil Brick Oven Pizza
28-17 Astoria Blvd.
Astoria, New York
www.basilbrickoven.com

Digg!

POSTED BY GEORGINA AT 12:20 PM



The green lasagna!



Basil's dining room

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ON THE SUBJECT OF GUEST BLOGGERS

Well, we've finally figured out that other people want to have us include their evaluations of sincerity in the towns and cities they live in. Frankly, we'd rather just visit (assuming that there's room at your house) and make the evaluation on our own, and know this - we unabashedly reserve the right to do so at a later date.-)

Nevertheless, anyone who wishes to do so may send their material to s4s@ltbprod.com. You must include your name, email address, the location of the place you are evaluating and a note that simply states that we have your permission to publish your content in the Searching For Sincerity blog. Please remember to keep it short.

Obviously, we make no promises regarding publication other than that we will give everything *sincere* consideration.