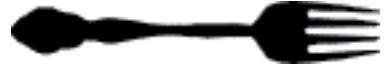


Portage Park Palates *Jill & Jan*



PPP decided on doing a second helping of the **Veranda Inn**. We really should try this place in better weather because we have yet to be on the “veranda.” So, on a cold snowy night, PPP plus three snuggled into a corner table and went to work.

For you who have visited Veranda since our first review the décor is pretty much the same. A large, yet warm main room with tables and large plants on a couple of different levels. A large inviting bar is located on one side of the room and there is a TV or two scattered around.

From beginning to end our service, provided by Eric, was friendly and attentive. Our meal started with a complimentary generous helping of Taramosalata and a basket of fresh bread. We placed our drink order that consisted of some wine by the glass (\$5.25), Zywiec beer (\$2.00) and a cocktail. The Taramosalata (Greek Caviar on the menu) was good slathered on the bread and as usual, the conversations started.

After a bit of talking, which is one of the mainstays of PPP, we decided on our appetizer selections. We ordered Saganaki (\$6.25), and Loukaniko (\$7.25), Loukaniko is a Greek sausage and is served with sliced cucumbers and tomatoes. The Saganaki came with the obligatory Opa! and flame. The Saganaki was actually quite good, one of the better I have had in a while, crisp and lemony. The Loukaniko was a generous serving and also worth a try. And, we needed more bread.... It is so difficult doing this column.

Most of us ordered from the Specials menu. Athenian Chicken (\$6.99), two lemony skinless breast pieces with a generous helping of fresh mixed vegetables over rice. Pork Chop (\$9.99), one chop with the same vegetables and mashed potato. Half Slab of ribs (\$8.99), with fries. 8 oz Prime Rib Eye (\$9.99), again, vegetables with choice of potato. The Rib Eye cut was more of what I would call a breakfast steak. A large thin cut, rather than the Prime Rib you may be familiar with. This special came with a choice of soup or salad, the salad was ordered and was quite a large dinner salad. Last was the Spicy Mediterranean Chicken (\$12.75). This was ordered off the regular menu, you had your choice of how spicy you wanted it, our companion ordered medium and enjoyed it... All of the specials came with a choice of Navy bean or chicken and pasta soup. For some reason we all got the chicken soup. It was quiet good.

At the end of the meal a complimentary plate of melon with chocolate sauce was placed on the table. This was a nice touch. At this point, most of us were too full for desert but we were able to try the Baklava. Served warm, it was a good finish.

Overall our experience at Veranda was enjoyable. All the food was prepared very well. We found the special menu had a good selection and they gave you generous portions. In many cases we opted for Greek dishes, but, Veranda has a good selection of American dishes. This restaurant really should be more crowded. If you have been to Veranda, go back for your second helping. If you haven't tried it yet, time to check it out.

The Veranda Inn is at 5700 W. Irving Park Road, with a small parking lot in the back. They are open from 11:00am to 2:00am and have live music on the weekends, but as always, call first to make sure. Phone: 773-283-8800.

Once a month we will be eating at a restaurant in the Portage Park area and writing an article that will appear in the newsletter about the visit. Our visits are anonymous to the owners – so we do not receive special treatment. We are also paying for our own meals. If you are interested in joining us please contact us at communications@portagepark.org. We will notify you of the location of the restaurant. Our requirements are that you do not notify the restaurant; we will divide the check up evenly, share the dishes and offer opinions for the review. An article about the restaurant will appear in the following PPNA newsletter. If you have a favorite restaurant you would like to suggest, please send your suggestions to communications@portagepark.org.