



Happy Hour at Vergina in Naples is a Game Changer



Vergina

The [Bice Group](#) are a consortium of restaurants primarily in the United States and the Middle East among other locations. Starting with their original Naples, FL location, [Bice](#), the Bice group has recently rapidly expanded their presence with other brandings. These include [Kitchen](#), [Cafe Milano](#), [Vergina](#) and the upcoming restaurant, [La Trattoria](#). Interestingly, all of these locations are within 1/2 mile of each other in [Downtown Naples](#).

Having written about two of these establishments, [Bice](#) and [Kitchen](#), I thought I would check out the happy hour at [Vergina](#) which was acquired by the Bice group almost a year ago.

They are considering changing the name to Monticello. Personally, I think this would be a big mistake as the restaurant's present name has a significant amount of name recognition locally, being open for over 10 years before changing hands.



Outside dining on 5th Avenue S

Bice Group is doing a bit of different marketing at its Naples 5th Avenue S. locations, and offering a happy hour with most, if not all of it's menu items at 50% off. I have my own thoughts on this, but more later in this post.

In all the years I have lived in Naples, I have never eaten at Vergina. Recently I discovered their happy hour, which runs from 3-5 PM. Their [Menu](#) items during this time are 50% off. They also have beer, wine and drink specials at happy hour. One can indulge with this very good food and drink value in the bar area, the restaurant or at both of their outside dining areas.

Before ordering, my dining companion (DC) and I were brought some bread and olive oil dip. The bread was delicious, and the seasoned olive oil a perfect accompaniment. I wish there would have been more of it, and there was upon request.



Deconstructed mussels al forno

DC and I split an order of steamed mussels al forno. This seemed to be a deconstructed version, as the traditional dish uses roasted breaded mussels, forno meaning oven in Italian. These very large PEI mussels were served in a traditional sauce of olive oil, wine, garlic, red pepper flakes and parsley. The side of grilled crostini was a nice touch, and an ode to the more traditional version. The mussels were great, meaty and well seasoned. The broth, as usually the case, is a great dip for the bread served. I just wish there would have been more mussels but at happy hour prices it was all good.

We then moved onto our mains. I picked the pappardelle bolognese, ribbon pasta with a slow cooked beef and pork ragu. The pasta, made in house was very good, but the ragu was ok, not the best I have had. Thank God for parmesan cheese, it always makes every thing better.



Garlic broccoli rabe

I also ordered a side of garlic broccoli rabe. Broccoli rabe is not really broccoli, but part of the family of cruciferous vegetables, their name derived from the Latin cross-bearing. This family of vegetables includes cauliflower, cabbage, garden cress, bok choy, broccoli and Brussels sprouts. They are high in vitamin C and fiber and there is anecdotal evidence for other health benefits. This was good and large enough to share with my DC.



Chicken Marsala

Next my DC ordered the chicken Marsala. It was the star of the show. With this dish, chicken breasts are braised in a mixture of Marsala, butter, olive oil, mushrooms, and spices, and served atop mashed potatoes. Braised spinach is added as well. This main choice was fantastic, and definitely the winner in the war of the entrees that night. I will add it was a bargain at the happy hour price of \$12.00, again all with a table side view of 5th Avenue S.

The food at the “new” Vergina was good to excellent. The happy hour offer is an extremely good value for prices in downtown Naples, and this promotional offer is highly recommended. The Bice Group is becoming a culinary presence in downtown Naples, and their happy hour business model in their soon to be 5 downtown restaurants may be a game changer. That may be a good thing as I am hearing talk of \$70 entrees in at least one of the downtown Naples establishments. To my knowledge, there is not one Michelin starred restaurant in the state of Florida but who knows, it may happen one day.

The food at Vergina is good, especially at happy hour prices and the seating along 5th avenue, sublime. I hope readers will check out this very good value.

That’s that for another post on Forks.

Verginia

700 5th Avenue S.

Naples, FL 34102

(239)659-7008

[Vergina Restaurant Website](#)

Happy hour from 3-5 PM daily excluding holidays; All major credit cards accepted; No happy hour kid’s meals, Valet parking available.

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