

## **AVANTI EXECUTIVE CHEF JUMPS SHIP TO PLAY THE PICCOLO**

BY Matt Mroczka

For over 20 years he served as the executive chef for Avanti's Ristorante. Now, Raul Pena is conjuring culinary magic at Caffè Piccolo, 3309 North Scottsdale Road. Both Caffè Piccolo and Pena specialize in mouthwatering Italian cuisine, making the union an instant success. Pena has fortified Caffè Piccolo's already tantalizing menu with some of his own personal favorites, such as the perennially-popular Mediterranean dessert Tiramisu. He has also brought his recipe for Cream Brulee and many other decadent desserts on over to the Piccolo.

Desserts, however, are not the only tastebud-tempting items on the Piccolo's menu. Pena's Daily specials include fresh Atlantic King Salmon, lightly poached in white wine and spices, topped with a creamy hollandaise sauce. If you've never had Osso Buco, you'll melt with one taste of this fragrantly-seasoned tender veal served over a bed of homemade linguine or savory rice. How about Pena's Veal Carciolo? Picture this: crunchy breaded veal slices and artichoke

hearts sautéed in white wine, lemon and garlic.

And all of this is to be enjoyed in Caffè Piccolo's black and white art deco surroundings. The mood is laid back enough for friends wanting that extra slice of atmosphere; cordial enough for a business dinner; quaint enough for an intimate dinner for two. A quaint heated/misted patio reminiscent of Old Venice is available for patrons wanting to enjoy Arizona's beautiful outdoor nights.

The wait staff is overflowing with enthusiasm. Your wish is their command. On Friday and Saturday nights you're treated to the talent of Don Gross, one of the valley's premiere pianists. What could be more down-home Italian than a bottle of wine, some pasta, garlic bread and a piano playing in the background to pull you in, sit you down and treat you to one of the finest culinary experiences in the Phoenix metro area.

Just like any fine dining establishment, Caffè Piccolo offers an impressive list of wines. Whether it's a fine bottle of vino straight from Italy, or a Chardonnay from the Napa Valley, they've got it ready, waiting, a corkscrew in hand. One word to describe your Caffè Piccolo experience: AMBIANCE! Okay, here's another:

MAGNIFICO!

Before the theater and after shopping, Raul and his staff await, ready to serve you at Caffè Piccolo, 3309 North Scottsdale Road, between Osborn and Thomas. Only minutes from Scottsdale's Fashion Square Mall, many of the valley's finest resort hotels, theaters and the freeway. The Piccolo is open from 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. nightly. Reservations are suggested, especially during the weekends. Of course, all major credit cards are accepted. Call 945-4155 today.

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For more information contact Matt Mroczka at Sliced Bread 917-239-7164

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