

M'Tucci's Moderno Italian Restaurant

Another jewel in the M'Tucci's diadem



Latest visit: March 25, 2017

First visit: January 26, 2017



Best Newcomer: 2017

M'Tucci's Moderno Italian Restaurant is the fourth jewel in the crown of the M'Tucci's empire. The owners, Jeff Spiegel and Katie Gardner, know how to put together a crowd pleaser. Inventive food and exemplary service are the rule in their places. Moderno is on my [Best Rio Rancho Restaurants List](#), my [ABQ Top Ten List](#), and I have bestowed on it my coveted [Best Newcomer of 2017](#) Award even though the year is not yet one-quarter finished. That's how good it is.

The Dazzler and I were bedazzled by the food served at a soft opening of M'Tucci's newest location in Rio Rancho two days before their grand opening. Excellent food, ambience, and service all around. This is destined to become my newest favorite.

Moderno had its full public opening on Friday, January 27. Go there. Here is a few words about some of the dishes on our first visit:



Charcuterie

Charcuterie Board

Sopressata Salami, Morbier Cheese, Homemade Rosemary Mustard, Olive Oil, Sea Salt, Market Bread
Easily among the best I have tasted.



Spinach Fonduta

Spinach Fonduta

Spinach, Garlic, Heart of Palm, Four Cheeses, Toasted

Looks like an ordinary boring cocktail; party dip with pita wedges. Looks are deceiving. Full rich and tasty mixture will have you begging for more.



Pan-Seared Salmon

Pan-Seared Salmon

Seared Fresh Atlantic Salmon, Roasted Artichoke, Sautéed Arugula, Mashed Potatos, Fried Capers, Lemon Butter Sauce, Smoked Prosciutto Powder. (Deanell substitutes polenta for the mashed potatos).

All the M'Tucci's venues do salmon insanely well. Moderno is no exception.



Gnudi

Gnudi

Fresh Handmade House Ricotta Dumplings, Preserved Lemon, Olive Oil, Sautéed Spinach, Caramelized Onion, Pecorino, Bread Crumbs.

Surely you have had Gnocchi before. Gnudi is a relative, but made with ricotta instead of potatos. This is a real taste treat, and has become a new favorite.



Port Wine Bread Pudding

Brioche Bread Pudding

Port Wine Cherries, Chocolate Ganache, Whipped Mascarpone.

If this dessert gets to the regular menu, it will earn a place near the top of my Hall of Fame Bread Pudding List.

Three days after our first visit I returned and was treated to a house full of delighted patrons. This is without any advertising. Word of a good thing spreads quickly.

It is now my newest favorite, and the Bread Pudding will appear near the top of my Best Bread Pudding List. More dishes:



Cream of Mushroom Soup

Cream of Wild Mushroom Soup

Wild Mushrooms, Cream, Brandy, Roasted Portabella

This is not the cream of mushroom soup that you threw some chicken and rice into and baked in a casserole when you were a graduate student. It IS one of the very best soups I have ever had. Rich and smooth with a hauntingly earthy taste, it will have you crying for more.



Calamari

Calamari with Garlic Aioli.

Crispy Calamari, Spicy Marinara, Roasted Garlic Aioli

One of the two best calamari dishes I've had in ABQ. Crispy and light, they are perfectly fried. Not oily or greasy. I don't use the marinara. The aioli is excellent. Squeeze some extra lemon on them.



Arugula Salad

Arugula Salad

Roasted Red Peppers, Hearts of Palm, Goat Cheese, Arugula, Sweet Potato Hay, and a Balsamic Vinaigrette
Lightly dressed with a very tasty vinaigrette. The dressing does not mask the slightly peppery taste of the arugula.



Duroc Pork Chop

Duroc Pork Chop

House Cut 12oz Porterhouse, Artichoke-Parmesan Crust, Rosemary Mustard Butter Sauce, Grilled Garlic Polenta, Sautéed Baby Spinach.

Whether you grill, broil or bake these chops, they are known as the juiciest and most flavorful chops. Duroc pork chops are the equivalent of a bone in rib steak. They're also 100% antibiotic and hormone free. Individually packaged & flash frozen to lock in

freshness and flavor.

The exact origin of the Duroc breed is unknown. A number of red pig strains developed around 1800 in the United States in areas such as New York and New Jersey. The modern Duroc originated from crosses of the Jersey Red of New Jersey and the Duroc of New York.

John Haas performs his usual magic on them.



Brioche Bread Pudding

Brioche Bread Pudding

Port Wine Cherries, Chocolate Ganache, Rich Vanilla Gelato. Superb.

Same dish as we had at the soft opening, but with a different presentation.



Pork Cheek Pappardelle

Pork Cheeks on Pappardelle

This dish is not on the menu, but it should be. The cheeks may be the tastiest part of the pig. Slow cooked and served with an excellent pappardelle.

This dish appears on my [Best Dishes of 2017](#). A new favorite.

From the bar.

[Austin Leard](#) behind the bar is every bit as much a magician as is John Haas in the kitchen. I love Rye Manhattans, and Austin will prepare a flight of three made from different very good ryes. His shrubs are unbelievably good, too.



Rye Manhattans

What others are saying

[Gil Garduño](#)'s New Mexico's Sesquipedalian Sybarite

"Habitués of the M'Tucci restaurant family will recognize the influence of Chefs Haas, Gray and Cronin on the menu at M'Tucci's Moderno, a menu which mostly resembles that of the flagship albeit with more steaks and chops than its brethren. In some ways, Moderno combines the best of its predecessors, offering for example, the charcuterie boards and market bread from the Market & Pizzeria as well as some familiar entrees heretofore available only at the mothership. The menu is a delight to peruse. Segmented into sections?antipasti, insalata & zuppa, pasta, secondi, artisan pizza/lavosh flatbread and contini?makes it easy to navigate though you might have a hard time deciding what to order.



of Wild Mushroom[Gil]

"We also found every nuanced morsel absolutely delicious. On a blustery February day, the **cream of wild mushroom soup** especially hit the spot. Constructed from wild mushrooms, Shiitake, Cremini, Portabella, heavy cream, brandy and olive oil, it's got

the comforting, soul-warming properties of all great soups. It's a soup that penetrates deep into your taste buds and thoroughly satisfies your palate and belly. It's the type of soup this multi-time judge would love to see at the **Roadrunner Food Bank's** annual Souper Bowl next January (hint, hint)."

[Pat Zimmernam](#)?Yelp Elite 2017



Calamari

"From beginning to end, everything was delightful including the exceptional service. My server was so knowledgeable about the menu, advising me of the portions and ingredients. I went for the calamari with garlic aioli and a margarita. Great choice! Their attention to detail was apparent with surprising touches, like the slice of cucumber in the water, very refreshing. The calamari was battered with a crispy coating that was light and non-greasy. It was tender, delicious and cooked perfectly. With the garlic aioli, the flavor was over the top!

"If the excellence of the calamari portends what's to come, we're in for delectable bounty from experienced, thoughtful food experts who dedicate themselves to providing the finest produce for your pleasure and enjoyment. This is a dining experience that will create a wonderful memory for you and you'll return again and again to be pampered and appreciated."



M'Tucci's Moderno

Hours

Mon	11:00 am - 10:00 pm
Tue	11:00 am - 10:00 pm
Wed	11:00 am - 10:00 pm
Thu	10:00 am - 11:00 pm
Fri	11:00 am - 11:00 pm
Sat	11:00 am - 11:00 pm
Sun	11:00 am - 9:00 pm

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Get Directions

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