



Procento's Pizzeria Pasta and More

by Rich Belmont



In Italian Procento's is pronounced pro-CHEN-toes. You might as well learn to say it the right way now because once you eat there you will be going back – a lot!

Procento's is a small Italian restaurant located in Galena, IL on Franklin Street just east of Main Street. It's actually located in the basement of a very old building and yet it is cheerful, bright and very nicely decorated.



This is a family owned restaurant operated by Jack and Tammy Edens. They have been married 30 years so it is no surprise their sons Jack Junior, 27 and Ryan, 24 have been in the restaurant business their entire lives. They all love it and it shows. When you walk in you are warmly greeted and you can see how eager they are for you to have a good time and mangiare (eat)!

Jack started in the restaurant business in 1972 when he opened Pope's Garden of Eden in Mundelein, IL. The restaurant was named after both his father Arthur Edens and his stepfather Anthony Pope Procento. It was a large restaurant known for steaks, lobsters and American cuisine. But Jack's first love was cooking Italian. When he was a teenager he started learning from his step-grandparents, Dominic and Annunziata Procento. So Jack took a year off to study Italian culinary arts and pizza making. In the early 1980's he established Double D Pizza in Waukegan, IL. This is where he perfected his famous double-decker pizza with homemade crust and special pizza sauce. Double D stood for Double-Decker.



When he and Tammy decided to move to Galena in 2001 Jack was already a renowned Pizzaiolo. Shortly thereafter he became the pizza maker for Gary Lapidis, owner of the long gone Café Italia at the corner of Main and Franklin Streets. He quickly gained a reputation as an outstanding Italian Chef. For several years he was hounded by Galena diners who wanted him to establish his own place. So in 2006 he opened Procento's Pizzeria, Pasta and More named in honor of his stepfather. In an interesting twist of fate it is located in the basement of the same building that housed Café Italia.

Procento's is not just a pizzeria. It is a full restaurant with a whole menu of authentic Italian Sandwiches, Pasta and Italian Dinners. The place is really operated by Tammy and their sons. After all, Jack is almost 80 years old! You can say he is the Executive Chef and he still insists on making the Impasto (pizza dough). He also likes to walk around visiting with his customers who usually become instant friends for life.

There is a nice selection of wine and beers. They all go well with the Italian specialties. My guests enjoyed tasting several Chianti vintages. There is an assortment of imported and domestic beers and Potosi craft brews are featured.

The vegetables are always fresh and all sauces are made in-house. An excellent Chicken Tortellini Soup is available every day.

The salads are made with greens tasting like they were just picked from the garden. For instance, the Spinach Salad is a large plate of leafy green spinach topped with sliced eggs, bacon crumbles, tomatoes, red onions and drizzled with homemade warm bacon dressing. I really like

the Caprese Salad which is an off-menu special. This is made with thick slices of tomatoes, fresh basil, thick slices of mozzarella and tangy Aceto Balsamico di Modena (Balsamic Vinegar of Modena).



All the appetizers are fabulous but some of them are real stand-outs. For example Procento's Sticks are bread sticks stuffed with mozzarella cheese. The Calamari is very popular; the tender squid is lightly bread and fried. The Shrimp Jammers are highly unusual: I have never before tasted fried shrimp filled with Monterey Jack Cheese, an enticing pairing if there ever was one. Oh, and then there is the Sicilian Grilled Tomatoes. If you like gorgonzola cheese as much as I do you will love these thick tomato slices covered with melted gorgonzola, olive oil and toasted almonds.

Procento's Pizzeria, Pasta and More

105 Franklin Street, Galena, IL 61036

815-777-1640 www.Procentos.com

HOURS: Sun-Thur: 11a.m. – 9 p.m., Fri-Sat: 'till 10 p.m., Tue: Closed

DINING STYLE: Come as you are

NOISE LEVEL: Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Procento's Bread Sticks; Calamari; Sicilian Grilled Tomatoes; Double Decker Pizza; Labella Bella, Mediterranean and Spinach and Roma Tomatoes

Gourmet Pizzas; Italian Beef & Combo Beef & Sausage Sandwiches; Italian Submarine; Lasagna; Manicotti; Chicken Marsala; Chicken Parmesan; Seafood Casino; Meat Ravioli; Cannoli; Tiramisu; Key Lime Pie; Turtle Cheesecake

LIQUOR SERVICE: Beer & Wine only

PRICES: Apps: \$4.95-\$9.95, Lunch: \$7.95-\$11.95,

Entrées: \$11.95-\$20.95

PAY OPTIONS: Cash, Debit, Visa, MasterCard, Discover

ACCESSIBILITY: Entrance: No – Restrooms: Yes

KIDS POLICY: Welcome! Menu, High Chair, Boosters

RESERVATIONS: No **CATERING:** No **TAKE OUT:** Yes

DELIVERY: Local Hotels only **PARKING:** On Street



The sandwiches are all terrific. The Combo (beef and sausage) and the Meatball are made with Fontanini sausage and meatballs. Fontanini is a very old and very well known Chicago meat purveyor who just a few years ago moved into a new manufacturing plant in McCook, IL. Fontanini is the recipient of numerous American Masters of Taste Gold Medal Awards. The Italian Submarine is wonderful: it's made with Genoa salami, capicola (where I come from this is called gabagool), pepperoni, mozzarella, provolone, lettuce, tomatoes and onions. It also has pastrami which I have never had on an Italian sub before. I was surprised at how much it enhanced the flavor of the Italian meats. My favorite sandwich is Italian Beef. (above) A generous serving of thinly sliced Sandwich- Cut Beef is stuffed into Italian bread and topped with mild or hot giardiniera. A homemade au jus is served on the side and you can add mozzarella or provolone if you so choose.

All the sandwiches are served on delicious Turano bread. Mariano Turano founded his Italian bakery in Chicago in 1962. His bread is now famous and it is so satisfying to find it in Galena!



Procento's offers both a thin crust pizza and the extraordinary Double Decker pizza. This is actually two thin crust pizzas layered one on top of the other and delicately brought together to form a hand rolled crust on top and bottom. You can add 20 different ingredients to your pizza including a few unusual ones like broccoli, sauerkraut and artichoke hearts.

The current menu also lists 8 Gourmet Pizzas. The most popular are: Labella Bella topped with sausage, portabella mushrooms, melted

gorgonzola, mozzarella, provolone, Roma tomatoes and fresh basil; Spinach and Roma Tomatoes with olive oil, garlic, parmesan, basil pesto, mozzarella and ricotta cheese; Mediterranean overloaded with grilled chicken breast, basil pesto, olive oil, mozzarella, feta cheese, chopped peperoncini and kalamata olives.



The Dinner Entrées are just what you would expect if you were dining in Southern Italy. The Baked Mostaccioli is covered in a rich marinara sauce, topped with mozzarella cheese and oven baked. Lasagna is made with pounds of ricotta cheese in every pan. The Chicken Marsala is exceptional: a huge chicken breast is sautéed in Marsala wine, fresh mushrooms and capers and finished with a beef and Marsala wine reduction on your choice of pasta. My favorite is Chicken Parmesan : a chicken breast is patted in flour, topped with marinara sauce and baked with mozzarella. I really like this on top of angel hair pasta.



The Seafood Casino is truly an exceptional dish. It was developed by Gary Lapidis at Café Italia. It contains Slipper Lobster, Shrimp and Crabmeat. It is topped with mozzarella and a little grated cheddar and Asiago cheeses for color. Then it's covered with a freshly made whipping cream and Romano cheese Alfredo sauce. It is baked in small quantities and these dishes go fast so if you want one arrive early!



As you know I always say life is too short so have the dessert. Well this time I insist. On any day you can find an assortment including Cannoli, Tiramisu, Key Lime Pie, Lemon Mascarpone Cake, Chocolate Fudge Cake, Spumoni, Turtle or White Chocolate Raspberry Cheesecake. Any of these desserts are just too good to pass up. One of my favorites are Cannoli which means "little tubes" in Italian and are fried pastry dough shells hand stuffed at Procento's with sweet ricotta cheese cream. Procento's dips the ends in Pistachio (pistachios) in keeping with true Sicilian tradition. Another favorite is Tiramisu. It means "pick me up" and is made of ladyfingers dipped in coffee, layered with a whipped mixture of egg yolks, egg whites, sugar and mascarpone cheese and flavored with cocoa. The desserts are made by expert pastry chefs. Some are provided by Cindy Sedan of Cynthia's Extra Batch (www.ExtraBatch.com). The cheesecakes are from Cathy Moon of Galena Mainstreet Cheesecakes (www.GalenaMainStreetCheesecakes.com).



There are many fine Italian Restaurants in the Tri-States. However, if you have not already done so may I suggest you visit Procento's Pizzeria, Pasta and More? I promise you will experience Una Bella Differenza, a beautiful difference!