NEW YORK – Each time I go to New York City, I try and explore new restaurants. Such was the case in July when I enjoyed fabulous dining experiences at Del Frisco’s Double Eagle Steak House (www.delfrisco.com) and Patsy’s Italian Restaurant (www.patsys.com), both located close to Times Square.

Del Frisco’s (not connected to the West Island Montreal establishment of the same name) is an energetic, luxurious three-story restaurant, located at 1221 Avenue of the Americas. To say we were impressed is an understatement. General Manager Orlando Santana sat us at a beautifully placed top floor table of this seasoned dining establishment, which can accommodate more than 500 people at a time.

Del Frisco’s was established more than 20 years ago. The cornerstone of the menu is aged USDA Prime Beef. They serve only the best hand-cut steaks, chops and freshest seafood, including Australian cold water lobster tails while using the freshest ingredients to create mouthwatering appetizers, flavorful side dishes and irresistible desserts.

The sommeliers are on hand to guide you through their very extensive wine list while the bartenders will lift your spirits with hand-shaken martinis and handcrafted cocktails. We lucked out with sommelier Kristin Beckler and our waiter Tim. Kristin mixed and matched our selections of wine impeccably with the items Tim recommended. Did we really need to read the menu? Perhaps not, for we put our trust in Tim and the experience exceeded our wildest expectations.

We started off with their signature VIP cocktail, Svedka Clementine Vodka infused with fresh Hawaiian pineapple. Then came the appetizers. We shared another one of the house specialties, the crab cake with Cajun lobster sauce, shrimp cocktail and a Caprese salad – a simple Italian salad, made of sliced fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and green basil, seasoned with salt and olive oil. It closely resembles the colours of the Italian flag: red, white and green.

When it came to main appetizers, we also decided to share. Since Del Frisco’s is known for its fantastic steaks, that is what we wanted to sample. Tim recommended the bone in filet and the bone in prime rib eye. As sides, he suggested we try the Cauliflower and Brie au gratin and the Lobster Mac and cheese. We trusted him implicitly and he did not steer us wrong. Tim was accompanied to the table by three other servers who cut the meat and apportioned the sides. First class all the way around! For dessert we left just enough room to enjoy their fabulous lemon cake split in three and a serving of their equally spectacular chocolate mousse. You can call 212-575-5129 for reservations.

Patsy’s, located at 235 West 56th Street, had been known for years as Frank Sinatra’s restaurant of choice and has become a favorite with countless stars including Al Pacino, Alec Baldwin, Ben Stiller, George and Amal Clooney, David Letterman, Oprah Winfrey and Jennifer Lopez, to name a few.

Founded in 1944 by Pasquale “Patsy” Scognamillo, Patsy’s has been in its current and only theater district location (in the building next to the original site) since 1954. In almost 70 years of existence, Patsy’s Italian Restaurant has had only three chefs; the late Patsy himself, his son Joe Scognamillo, who has been at the establishment since the tender age of seven, and Joe’s son Sal Scognamillo, who has been manning the kitchen for the past 29 years. I had an opportunity to meet Sal, an incredibly friendly and personable gentleman. He greeted me with signed copies of his two cookbooks, one with a foreword by Ben Stiller and the other by Nancy Sinatra. Not only are the recipes and accompanied photos superb, but so are the stories about the celebrities.

The restaurant can seat 180 people and with its lunch and pre-theater specials, it is busy all of the time. Patsy’s attracts a varied clientele who enjoy the restaurant’s remarkable signature dishes, including succulent veal chops Siciliano, spicy lobster Fra Diavolo, tender chicken contadina, and savory calamari stuffed with seafood. Spectacular seafood such as striped bass marechiare, lobster oreganata, and shrimp scampi are always requested, as are meat favorites like sirloin steak pizzaiola with peppers and mushrooms, stuffed veal chop marsala, and chicken liver cacciatore.

I was dining alone on this evening, as other members of the family enjoyed a show nearby. My server Tony gave me time to review the appetizing menu and then helped with some recommendations. I started off with orders of fried calamari and fried zucchini. The former was served with yummy marinara sauce on the side while the latter was prepared in the form of French Fries – crispy and deliciouls. I followed that with a magnificent chopped salad, prepared in the form of French Fries – crispy and delicious. I followed that with a magnificent chopped salad, one of the best I can remember having in years. For the main course there were so many options. Tony assured me I could not go wrong with the spaghetti and meatballs and he was correct. The meatballs cut like butter and melted in my mouth. By this time I literally had to take a break in order to regain enough of an appetite to sample some of the mouthwatering homemade desserts that passed by my table on a large cart. When I had a hard time choosing, Tony made it easy. He provided me with the equivalent of one piece of cake in three different variations: chocolate mousse, cannoli and Napoleon (custard, whipped cream and puff pastry). I was glad that I had a nine block walk to meet up with my family, for I needed some exercise after this very special dining experience.

For more information call (212) 247-3491, e-mail anne@patsys.com or log on to www.patsys.com where you can view the entire menu. Sal wanted me to share with readers the fact this is “the only” Patsy’s Italian Restaurant in the world that his family runs. The temptation to franchise might be there, but why mix with perfection?

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