

## By Robin Mines

It took me less than ten minutes of people watching from my vantage point at Luxy Bistro the other night to realize that an glowing review I might write about the place would be a case of preaching to the converted.

Talk about a West End institution. On a hot and sunny midweek evening, Luxy's tables were steadily occupied by regulars, too, judging by their easy banter with the wait-staff and their uncanny ability to order for the whole table without even looking at the menu. "You think this is busy," said our server Afsi as she dashed between tables. "Try coming here on a Friday or Saturday night. Now that is busy." So why is Luxy Bistro so popular? Simple. Because:

A) It's nice inside.

B) It's nice inside, but not so much that you feel compelled to wear anything besides your usual jeans and clean t-shirt.

C) It's got good music and good vibes.

D) It's got good food.

E) It's got good prices.

It works. Sandwiches and burgers are the name of Luxy Bistro's post-breakfast game before four or so in the afternoon, according to Afsi; pastas from fourish on. "Sure, you can order a burger anytime," she says, "but in the evening everybody goes for the pasta."

So we did, too. We were a little bit boggled by the two dozen choices on the menu, so the ever-helpful Afsi gave us the rundown of the pastas that she and Luxy's regulars like the best, which helped to narrow our choices to a manageable number.

Penne con pollo, definitely, she said, with Luxy's special sauce; seafood lasagna, tortellini pollo ala pesto linguine ala carbonara, Fettuccini fruiti de mare, and linguine con pollo (chicken in a cream parmesan sauce- "mmm... very garlicky.")

We tried three, and debated all the way down Davie Street which was the best.

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They were all very, very good: the linguine carbonara, possessing more than it's fair share of prosciutto and peas; the tortellini pollo ala pesto, laced with fresh cream and probably hopelessly high in calories (but who's counting?); and the penne con pollo- the best of all, insisted my friend, and he's probably right - with a great blast of flavor thanks to generous quantities of sun-dried tomatoes, black and green olives and capers.

With garlic toast and caesar salad (if they doubled the garlic in the dressing I wouldn't complain), an order of pasta costs anywhere between \$6.95 and \$10.95. That is a deal. Wine prices are low, too; a glass of the house plonk (actually not bad, especially the white) for \$3, half litre for \$7.5, litre for \$15. With a little rough arithmetic, that works out to \$25 or so for pasta for two of you with a half litre of wine, plus a nice tip for Afsi or one of her hard-working colleagues. Two thumbs up, my friend and I agree; Luxy Bistro is a winner ( but, hey, you knew that already.)

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