



Il Verde at Bowen Hills. Picture: Mark Cranitch.

QLD Taste

Restaurant review: Il Verde, King St, Bowen Hills

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THE menu at just-opened Italian eatery Il Verde lines up the usual suspects.

The one-pager runs to a handful of safe starters and salads, half a dozen comfortable mains and a slew of instantly recognisable pasta and pizza offerings before rounding out with a few mainstream desserts.

Hardly anything to set the culinary world alight. But when those dishes jump off the page and land on the plate, that's when they shine.

The Bowen Hills restaurant, part of the new King St dining strip, has eschewed

innovation in favour of nailing classic Italian dishes with mass appeal.

We started with one of Il Verde's two arancini (\$12) dishes and were presented with four golf ball-sized morsels atop a puddle of napolitana sauce and a light sprinkling of grated grana padano.

The sauce was needed to soften the ball's hard and dry crumbed shell, but once cracked, it revealed a voluptuous filling of truffled wild mushrooms and mozzarella cheese.



 The Caprese salad. Picture: Mark Cranitch.

A Caprese salad (\$18) was a simple dish, but supremely executed to offset the arancini's richness. Thick wedges of plump heirloom tomatoes at room temperature and olive oil-brushed toasted ciabatta pieces ringed a nest of rocket and basil leaves topped with a dome of soft, salty buffalo mozzarella.

A double-sided drinks list trumpeted several dozen wines – most available by the glass – with labels evenly split between Australian and imported drops, as well as beer, cider, Italian liqueurs and cocktails.

The Il Verde (\$15) appeared a dubious blend of Midori, dry martini, apple juice and

prosecco, but staff assured it was no relation to the melon liqueur cocktails ubiquitous in Brisbane nightclubs in the '90s. Garnished with slices of lime and cucumber and a skewer of green cocktail olives, the spritz was refreshing and certainly not the sickly sweet concoction I'd feared.

Staff cleared plates, refilled water glasses and promptly returned with the next course.

The quality of ingredients and the light touch chef Ibrahim Haddad employed in the spaghetti con gamberetti (\$25) let the flavours sing.

The surprisingly light dish melded a safe zing of fresh chillies and sliced garlic with the sweetness of locally sourced, wild-caught prawns imbued with robust Italian parsley.

A balanced measure of olive oil and grana padano was tossed through the dish to coat the pasta rather than smother it.

Pizza Genovese (\$22) presented with more of the ripe and rosy heirloom tomatoes, thinly sliced and arranged over the white base with imported fior di latte, shavings of pecorino and generous dollops of verdant housemade pesto.

The thin base had a crisp exterior and slight chew to the crust, with Il Verde's menu listing 14 flavour combinations.

Dessert offerings are concise and decadent – tiramisu, cannoli stuffed with hazelnut mousse or panna cotta.



📷 The panna cotta with passionfruit sauce and the Il Verde cocktail. Picture: Mark Cranitch.



📷 Panna cotta with passionfruit sauce. Picture: Mark Cranitch.

A limited range of Shlix gelato is on the menu and morbid curiosity compelled us to order the two available flavours – date and walnut, and tomato and basil (\$8).

The former was a hit, the latter a disaster. Haddad admitted the custom combination divided diners and was commissioned for a function where tiny scoops topped canape-sized serves of fior di latte.

The panna cotta (\$11), however, was a triumph – a semi-firm mould of lush “cooked cream” topped with a tart passionfruit coulis and chewy round of candied lemon.

It’s not high-end or particularly innovative, but Il Verde’s light, fresh and flavoursome approach to simple Italian fare is sure to win fans.