

Lifestyles

Creative Cooking

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American cuisine with a Greek flair in the village center

What are you in the mood for today? A gourmet omelet, sandwich, fresh fish, burger, pasta, chicken, stuffed baked potato, or a salad? No need to visit many restaurants. Just stop at Scarsdale Metro Restaurant, where the huge varied American menu with a Greek flair will satisfy most tastes.

Owners Steve Maravegias and Gus Catechis worked together at city restaurants, and opened Scarsdale Metro Restaurant seven years ago. They were looking for a location in the suburbs with a Manhattan atmosphere. Scarsdale suited their needs. Maravegia said, "Our clientele is well educated about food and they recognize quality."

Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Metro offers any menu items any time of day and seems to be a popular lunch place, among local business people and young mothers and children. This is no surprise since Scarsdale Metro offers something for everyone, as close to homemade as possible. Catechis said, "The biggest compliment is that our place is always full."

Plan on some extra time to read the booklike menu. I've sampled items from several categories and still have a long way to go.

If you are in a breakfast kind of mood, there's a variety of omelets, from avocado and turkey breast and Swiss; goat cheese, mushroom and spinach; Italian with sausage, roasted peppers and mozzarella; Mexican with avocado, cheddar and salsa; western; broccoli and cheddar; and feta and tomato.

Challah French toast, banana walnut or chocolate chip pancakes, and Belgian

waffles will satisfy a sweet tooth.

Open wide for a Metro sandwich. They are stuffed. Try chicken a la Greek, a Reuben or a triple decker of roast beef or chicken salad.

Most intriguing to me are the extra special salads, hearty in size and very fresh.

A Metro salad with grilled chicken, goat cheese, cranberries and tricolor greens is a fine choice as is the Bistro salad with grilled chicken, grapes, walnuts and arugula, port-brie with portobello mushrooms, brie, cranberries and greens, and Tuscan salad with grilled eggplant, yellow and green zucchini, goat cheese and greens. My favorite is shrimp salad, not too much mayonnaise over baby arugula, radicchio and greens. Other possibilities are mandarin, grilled mixed seafood, Corfu, California cobb, Cajun chicken, coconut shrimp and the list goes on.

A bottle of fabulous homemade dressing will be served with your salad. Its texture and flavor will enhance many of these excellent salads. This is the perfect lunch for me unless, of course, I crave a burger or a stuffed baked potato, available in many guises: beef, turkey, avocado, cheese, mushroom, cheddar bacon or Canadian buffalo burgers. Potatoes are served with cheddar, broccoli cheese and bacon or mushrooms.

I recently enjoyed a tasting of many dinner type items.

Fresh fish is very special here. Simply broiled, Greek style with herbs, spices and virgin olive oil, there is brook trout, filet of sole, salmon, swordfish, shrimp and scallops. Each arrives

with soup or salad, potato and vegetable. Lemon sole stuffed with seafood was delicious in its simplicity. A sauté of green beans, peppers and onions shared the plate. Greek cuisine is known for simple grilled fish and Metro does a great job. Charbroiled offerings include Romanian steak, sirloin steak and chopped steak. I opted for a rack of lamb. The monumental portion of seven chops of New Zealand lamb was pink and tender, no gamy taste, nicely seasoned and served with homemade mashed potatoes.

With the owners' Greek culinary roots I sampled some Greek specialties.

The mousaka was a perfect rendition of the classic meat and eggplant layered delight. At Metro, potato slices are layered with the meat and eggplant and a cream sauce permeates this tasty preparation. Spinach pie, filo pastry encasing a spinach, feta, dill, onion and scallion filling was crisp and tasty as well. Many chicken and veal dishes are offered and more than a dozen pasta preparations. My linguine with shrimp marinara was flavorful and abundant.

There's a children's menu, classic fountain drinks (egg creams, ice cream sodas), nonfat yogurt shakes and a variety of coffees, and many homestyle desserts including homemade rice pudding.

Maravegias and Catechis work very hard and their hard work paid off with the opening of Metro Deli in Heathcote. Because they go the extra mile in food and service, people are willing to travel the extra mile from other communities to enjoy a meal at Scarsdale Metro

Restaurant.

Following are my variations of dishes appearing on the Scarsdale Metro Restaurant menu.

Spinach cheese pie (12)

1/4 cup olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
2 scallions, chopped
2 pounds fresh spinach, washed, drained and chopped
1/4 cup dill, chopped
1/4 cup flat leaf parsley, chopped
salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup milk
1/2 pound feta cheese, crumbled
4 eggs, beaten
1/2 pound butter, melted
20 sheets filo pastry

In heavy saucepan, heat oil. Add onion and scallion and cook until translucent. Stir in spinach, cover and cook five minutes. Add dill, parsley, and salt and pepper. Simmer until dry. Place mixture in a bowl. Stir in milk; cool. Stir in cheese and fold in eggs. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Brush a 12- by 7- by 2-inch pan with butter. Lay one sheet of filo in pan. Brush with butter. Repeat with nine more pastry sheets. Lay spinach mixture evenly in pan. Repeat layering with remaining filo. Brush top with butter. Carefully cut into squares (about 12). Bake for about one hour until crisp and brown.

Mousaka (8-10 servings)

1 1/2 pounds ground beef
1 clove garlic, minced

salt and pepper to taste
1 tsp. cinnamon
2 onions, chopped
1 tsp. chopped parsley
4 Tbsp. butter
3 medium eggplants, sliced, soaked in salt water, drained and squeezed dry
vegetable oil for brushing
3 Idaho potatoes, peeled, sliced lengthwise, fried
1 cup tomato sauce and 1 cup water
grated Romano cheese for sprinkling

Cream sauce:

6 Tbsp. butter
6 Tbsp. flour
3 cups milk
4 egg yolks, lightly beaten

Melt butter. Add flour. Stir until golden. Gradually add milk. Stir until slightly thickened. Slowly add egg yolks. Stir and cook until lightly thickened.

Sauté beef, garlic, salt and pepper, onion, cinnamon and parsley in butter until juices are absorbed and meat is brown. Add tomato sauce and water and simmer until thick.

Brush eggplant slices with oil and broil on both sides until brown.

In 9- by 13-inch pan arrange layers of eggplant, fried potato and meat. Top layer should be eggplant. Pour cream sauce over all. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes. Serve.

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