

## **Renaissance Place Café is a Go-To Restaurant**

Tucked away in an office complex on Holland-Sylvania, Renaissance Place Café and Wine Bar is quickly becoming a great spot for lunch, dinner and, of course, a glass of wine with friends.

Joe Mercurio, local real estate developer with offices in the Renaissance Place complex, became the owner of this fine restaurant in August 2004. He is proud of manager and chef Kirk Dixon, chef Richard Michalkiweicz, and sous-chef Ryan Fleig. This team has certainly put together a terrific staff and a wonderful menu.

Renaissance Place Café offers a wide variety of specialty salads (\$6.29 - \$6.99) with fresh mixed greens and appetizing ingredients – grilled chicken, shrimp, fiesta taco, chef's salad, Greek salad. The warm spinach salad with chopped eggs, red onions, croutons, bleu cheese, and a side of warm bacon vinaigrette is one of the best in our area. As a Zone eating plan enthusiast, my favorite is the chicken Waldorf with diced chicken breast and apples, carrots, raisins, and walnuts.

The chefs prepare excellent soups including their house special lobster bisque, which is finished with a hint of sherry. Their 36-spice chili, creamy tomato, home-style chicken noodle, and vegetable barley are available in cup or bowl (\$2.49, \$3.49) or in a bread bowl with a tossed or warm spinach salad (\$5.99). Since their little loaves of bread are exceptional, this is quite a treat.

There are so many sandwich selections (\$4.99 - \$6.99), it's hard to know which ones to discuss, and all sandwiches can be prepared on a low-carb wrap. Reubens are prepared with either corned beef or turkey. Other customer favorites include Tuscan grilled chicken on Focaccia break with pesto mayo, roasted peppers, and mozzarella cheese; southwest chicken wrap with avocado, pico de Gallo, cheddar cheese, and chipotle mayo; and traditional grilled cheese with ham. All sandwiches are served with your choice of French fries, sweet potato fries – don't miss these, potato chips, pasta salad, potato salad, cottage cheese, or coleslaw. You may substitute a cup of soup or a tossed salad for 99 cents.

Choose 2 (\$6.99) and Choose 3 (\$7.59) give patrons the option of half of any sandwich, tossed salad, and cup of soup.

The Renaissance Place Café dinner menu (\$12.49 - \$18.99) is available every day after 4:00 p.m. Soups, salads, and sandwiches are available at lunch and dinner. They serve Certified Angus Beef and all their steaks are hand cut and aged for a minimum of 21 days - and the chefs know exactly what medium rare is. Several fish specialties include pan-seared Florida grouper with black bean relish, pistachio-crusting wild Alaskan grilled salmon with a Kentucky bourbon barbeque sauce, and sautéed Lake Erie perch with garlic lemon butter. One of their new specialty dinners is chicken roulade stuffed with fresh tomato, spinach, and mozzarella cheese, served with a mandarin orange relish and lime aioli. Dinner specials are available every day, including a \$9.99 offering, depending on which day of the week it is.

All dinners are accompanied by the RP house salad, vegetable, and your choice of French fries, sweet potato fries, pasta salad, or potato salad. If you prefer two portions of vegetable

and no starch – that’s fine. They are more than willing to accommodate your preferences. One evening, the vegetable was sautéed asparagus, red peppers, zucchini, yellow squash, and mushrooms. For those of you who have read my previous reviews, you may know that I’m mentally allergic to mushrooms. They happily made a double batch of crisp and nicely seasoned vegetables for me – vegetables that had never been in the same pan with a mushroom.

Pasta entrees (\$12.29 - \$15.29) with an RP house salad are also popular at Renaissance Place Café. Shrimp scampi is sautéed in butter, garlic, parsley, tomatoes, white wine, and lemon sauce – served on angel hair pasta. Chicken or shrimp may be added to pasta primavera and fettuccini Alfredo.

A full bar and extensive wine list are available in the Café and at the Wine Bar. Most wines are available by the glass (\$3.99 - \$6.75) as well as the bottle (\$15 - \$31). Chardonnay, Riesling, and Piesporter white wines from Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, California, and Washington are delightful additions to pasta, fish, and specialty salads. Framingham Sauvignon Blanc has the flavor of New Zealand passion fruit and gooseberries. Red wines include Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz, Zinfandel, and Pinot Noir from Spain, Australia, California, Washington, and Oregon enhance beef, veal, and pork selections. I’ve become fond of d’Arenberg Stump Jump, an Australian blend of Grenache, Shiraz, and Mourvedre. This Maclaren Vale wine is rich, with soft flavors of mulberry, plum, blackberry, and a touch of spice. Recommended by Doug, our waiter, Stump Jump is every bit as good as he said.

Doug Szparka is just one of the fine wait staff team at Renaissance Place Café. Mr. Mercurio comments, “We have really good servers – very experienced. We are fortunate to have them.” They are convivial and more than willing to please the customer, easily handling special requests.

The nice variety of appetizing dining selections, great wines, and excellent staff make Renaissance Place Café and Wine Bar a go-to restaurant. People in metro Toledo are fortunate to have another terrific place for wonderful lunch and dinner occasions.

Renaissance Place also offers banquet facilities for 40 to 225 people, which can be viewed on their RenaissancePlace.net website.

Renaissance Place Café and Wine Bar, 6060 Renaissance Place, just off Holland-Sylvania, half mile north of Sylvania Avenue, 419-882-1166.

Monday – Thursday, 11:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.; Friday, 11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m., Saturday, 4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Parking is available in front of the restaurant. Reservations are recommended.

Review by D. Ellen Critchley  
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