

Il Mulino at the Walt Disney World Swan: A Walt Disney World Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Out of the many Italian restaurants on Walt Disney World property, there's one that, until our most recent trip, we'd only visited once, and that's Il Mulino at the Swan.

Our first visit to Il Mulino, all the way back in 2007, is one that we remembered with great fondness. So why did it take us so long to get back there? I think part of the problem is that it's not on the Dining Plan, and we'd taken to using the Deluxe Plan in recent times. I also think it's easy to forget, as it's not in one of the "traditional" Disney hotels. Well, it was about time to put it right, and this time we took a few friends with us, so good were our memories from our first visit.

□ I have to say that Il Mulino was a lot busier and therefore noisier than our first time there. I suspect in the intervening years, people have discovered it, and it did seem that the hotel was busy, possibly with convention goers, which may explain the change we noticed. You walk through the bar, before arriving at the restaurant itself. There are some private side rooms, which is where we dined before, and these are a lot quieter, although the majority of the tables are in the massive main dining room.

□ The menu here is very expansive, and there's certainly plenty for everyone, so it took us a while for everyone to decide what they wanted. In addition to the typical appetizer choices, there was an entire section dedicated to seafood appetizers, as well as a section for salads, and soups. Many of the options were what you'd expect at an Italian restaurant, such as arancini (Italian rice balls over spicy marinara sauce), a Parmigiano Reggiano cheese plate, Caprese salad (which I opted for and found to be very good), and prosciutto and melon (which my husband had and enjoyed).

Il Mulino's appetizers from the sea or antipasti di mare, to give them their proper Italian name, had some wonderful sounding offerings on it, like the lightly fried calamari, and mussels or clams with garlic and white wine or spicy fra diavolo sauce, but the one that got our attention was the gamberi al Mulino or jumbo shrimp with Il Mulino spicy cocktail sauce, which some of our table went for. The presentation of it was superb, and I'm told it tasted pretty good, too.

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□ The choices at Il Mulino were just as wide ranging when we got to the entrees, with pizza, risotto, pasta, family-style dishes, steak, chicken, other meats, and fish dishes amongst the options. In total, I counted nearly 40 different items on this menu, which is pretty impressive, although I can't imagine it makes life easy for the chefs! In the end, I opted for the spaghetti al frutti di mare: baby shrimp, scallops, clams, mussels, and calamari, which came either with the spicy red or garlic white wine sauce. Even though I went for the garlic white wine option, I found this to be a little spicy for my taste.

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□ Non-meat eaters have a lot of choice at Il Mulino, with a fish section that included salmon, seared grouper, and jumbo shrimp. Vegetarians will also have no difficulty finding options here, from the three cheese pizza to mushroom risotto, pasta with tomato sauce or with mushrooms, or baked pasta stuffed with ricotta and spinach.

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□ Something worth knowing before dining at Il Mulino is that if you do go for a more traditional meat or fish meal, you may end up paying more if you want side dishes. Options included spinach in garlic and olive oil, roasted rosemary potatoes, garlic bread, and broccoli rabe with sausage and garlic, all setting you back either \$8 or \$9.

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□ As I still had some room when it came to dessert time, I couldn't resist sampling two; the cappuccino gelato, and it was a big enough amount that turned up, so be warned! I also tried the tiramisu, as it's one of my favorite desserts, and it was excellent. My husband sampled the flourless chocolate cake, and his verdict was that, had the menu not said flourless, he would never have known. Other options included the mixed berries coated with marsala zabaglione, Italian-style cheesecake, sorbets, and tartufo.

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□ We didn't mention anything to the others about the next part of the meal, as we weren't sure if the restaurant was still doing it, but sure enough, a free measure of limoncello was brought out to all of us after we'd finished our desserts. This is a lovely touch, and for those who don't know to expect it, a very welcome surprise. After all, it's not often you get something for nothing at Disney!

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□ So what did we make of our return visit to Il Mulino all these years later? We enjoyed the food, but we all felt that the atmosphere and the level of noise in the restaurant took the edge of our enjoyment of our meal, which was a great shame. Would we go back? Certainly, but probably not for a while. Having said that, from what we saw that night, Il Mulino certainly still seems to be doing well, even if some people only make it there every few years.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

Article last updated: 07-02-2015

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