

Little Italy in bustling Lothian Road

Lothian Road is busy. That's why I've driven past narrow-frontage Frizzante many times without noticing it among the plethora of shop signs and the heavy traffic.

Know where it is now and Scotland's best family-owned restaurant in the East in the Scottish Italian Awards 2019 is one to put on your list.

It is authentic. Walk through the door and you step into a wee bit of Italy. The smell was intoxicating as we waited for our hosts.

It's certainly cramped in the entrance hall but the restaurant extends back deep into the building. Interesting décor, artificial foliage, and, surprisingly, it adds to the little Italy effect.

Authentic Neapolitan ingredients are said to be used and the story starts two generations ago when Don Pasquale started his first business at La Dolce Vita in Edinburgh's East Fountainbridge.

He moved to Gilmore Place and Pasquale's was said to be "a massive success", entertaining film stars and football players among their guests, and bosses eventually moved to Lothian Road where father and son Jonathan combine what they call "the traditional and the modern".

The one sheet menu is packed with mouth-watering dishes from

nibbles, through pizza, pasta, carne plus specials on a black board.

Calamare Fritti (squid rings, lightly fried in homemade batter) proved a winner, cooked to a pleasing bite. The mozzarella caprese (fresh mozzarella, tomato and basil) was also enjoyed and then onto the mains.

The veggie ravioli stuffed with ricotta and spinach with a cream sauce was eye-catching and filled with flavour and one of the specials, sea bass, was irresistible. Two sizable fillets arrived in a soft white wine sauce covered with cherry tomatoes and a small dish of potatoes and broccoli. The fish fell off the fork. A delight.

An Amodo Pecorino Terre di Chieti white wine from Abruzzo in Italy (there's a surprise) was picked and it proved a perfect accompaniment to the dishes, "the fresh, tropical notes to the nose combining with a delicate florality" said the blurb. They did, thoroughly drinkable.

A wonderful meal in a great atmosphere in an extremely busy restaurant in a highly-competitive marketplace.

Frizzante, 95 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9AW:
barfrizzante@hotmail.co.uk: 0131 229 7788

Open Monday to Friday: 12pm to 2.30pm and 5pm to 10pm:
Saturday 12pm to 2.30pm and 4.30pm to 10.30pm; Sunday 5pm to 10pm

LOCATION: Frizzante is yards from these signboards outside the Usher Hall, across the road from now closed The Filmhouse. Blink and you may miss it, but don't walk on by.