

# A Taste of MARYLAND HEIGHTS

## Spazio Bistro Crafts Quick Gourmet Cuisine at Bargain Prices

When you're in the mood to escape from the office for a truly gourmet lunch at a great price, look no further than Spazio Bistro. It's a little off the beaten path, located at the Westport Comfort Inn on Lackland Road. But this hidden gem is well worth discovering, as its operators are none other than Russo's Gourmet Catering. If you've sampled Russo's work before, you know that the "Gourmet" in the title is well earned.

I met resident reviewer Jayne Carrier for a late Monday lunch. We were a little surprised at the bistro's format: you order at the bar, and a server then brings your food out to you. We quickly realized that Spazio is not for high-maintenance diners, as servers are few and far between (although the charming older gentleman circling the room to refill drinks never left us thirsty). However, there is unlimited free self-serve soup of the day available (bean and ham on the day we visited), and what it lacks in aggressive service, Spazio more than makes up for in its delicious dishes.

The bistro offers several weekly

specials, including a special entrée salad (this week's was almond sesame beef salad), several Atkins-friendly choices and more. They also have a daily pasta and salad combo, which Jayne decided to try: Capellini Mediterranean, rich with mushrooms, black olives, tomatoes and spinach and topped with marinara and Italian cheeses. Served along with a basic Italian salad, she had plenty left to take home for a second meal – a bargain at just \$6.95.

I ordered the Tuscan Chicken Flatbread from the sandwich menu. Herbed chicken breast chunks, Arborio rice, mozzarella, bacon, mixed greens and tomatoes were melted together queso-sadilla-style in a flour tortilla and served with spicy Caesar dressing on the side. The flatbread came with homemade potato chips and a small cup of pasta salad. It was a tasty lunch, but next time I think I'll try their unusual bruschetta menu: slices of artisan bread grilled in olive oil and heaped with various toppings, such as the Norcina (Italian sausage, prosciutto, caramelized onions, roasted peppers and Romano and Parmesan cheese)

and the Barese (lemon-grilled shrimp with sautéed spinach, Ricotta cheese and Blanco sauce).

The bistro usually offers a dessert selection of Russo's specialty cakes, pies, tortes and European mini desserts, but on that day the delivery had not yet arrived from their main location, so the dessert case held only a plateful of chocolate chunk cookies, which looked to be more chocolate than cookie (definitely a plus in my book).

The bistro is open for breakfast, and the scrumptious-sounding selections – custom-made omelets, homemade waffles and southern-style biscuits and gravy – are also an incredible deal. Call in your order ahead of time and pick it up on your way into work, and you'll likely spend the same amount of time and cash as you would have on a greasy drive-thru breakfast at one of the big burger chains. Wouldn't it be a nice change to eat a real breakfast to fuel your busy day – and inspire the envy of your co-workers as you chow down on pancakes and fresh fruit at your desk?

by Sara Berry

### Spazio Bistro

#### Address:

12031 Lackland Road  
Maryland Heights, MO 63146  
www.russosgourmet.com

**Phone:** (314) 576-0488

**Hours:** 6:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

#### Prices:

Breakfast: \$3 - \$7; appetizer platters: \$8 - \$11; salads: \$6 - \$8; sandwiches and bruschetta: \$6 - \$8; hot entrees: \$8 - \$12.

**Dress:** Casual

	Yes	No
Reservations		•
Smoking Allowed		•
Outdoor Dining	•	
Carry Out Available	•	
Credit Cards Accepted	•	
Kids Menu		•
Alcohol Served	•	



Spazio's spacious covered porch, which is also cooled by fans in warmer weather, is a lovely place to enjoy lunch and a breath of fresh air.