

Bradley Graupner



November 10, 2009
For use of Andreoli Italian Grocer
8880 E Via Linda
Scottsdale, Arizona 85258

Dear soon to be Andreoli habitué,

If you are reading this, you must be thinking of trying out Andreoli Italian Grocer. It's funny because looking back I can see that before eating at Andreoli I read restaurant reviews really for the sole purpose of making sure I wasn't going to waste my money or feel nauseated afterwards. Although I may have hoped that the next place I ate at would be enjoyable, I never really even considered that the next restaurant I visited could be so extraordinary that I immortalize it in conversations forevermore. You know- *that* kind of revered experience that usually only comes only a handful of times in your life - usually set completely aside from the everyday like that remarkable place abroad you stumbled upon in that unlikely town. Every time the Andreoli experience is an unparalleled one of *those*- distinctively unelaborate yet strikingly vivid, set aside to define its own place in your heart. The unsuspecting first timer will find their visit to surprisingly unforgettable.

You probably want me to get down to specifics of the food. Fair enough- the authentic un-Americanized food is as savory as the rest of Andreoli. It feels strange to just call it food because of food's typical association with simply "filling the tank." Andreoli's food is definitely not about just "filling the tank" although every visit results in eating a lot more than you planned on. Several times you will interrupt your own involved conversation struck with sudden appreciation for what's in your mouth. Every bite at Andreoli is like continuously re-reading masterpiece poetry- there is always something breathtaking you never stopped to appreciate before. Try an inexpensive mozzarella focaccia pizza and see why the chef's former protégé's have gone on to win best in the country on much more high-profile pizza endeavors. Be sure to sample the freshly baked table bread in Andreoli's own olive oil and you'll be whisked away to the old world (the owner touts that paying \$7 for a loaf of his bread saves you thousands in Italian airline tickets and the years of searching it would take to find bread as good- and you won't doubt it one bit). Visiting for lunch? Try an unpretentious sandwich made of with meat cured and butchered on site - that's right - the chef is also a master butcher. The cheese is so fresh you will think you are eating on the dairy farm. Dining in for dinner? You'll never have realized that real Italians made it *that* way, that real Italian sausage looks and tastes like *that*, or that the best spaghetti you'll ever have doesn't have *any* meatballs (and don't even try it or you'll upset the chef). Oh yeah and he's also a master pastry chef and chocolatier who used to bake delectables that the Prime Minister of Italy felt necessary to have specially flown into the palace every morning for breakfast, so try to control yourself while sampling them.

While the "food" is what keeps bringing you back to Andreoli, the whole experience is what you always remember. And I don't mean to suggest that they've created some sort of spurious facade of ambiance typical to restaurants nowadays. The only thing not from the old-world is the well-worn fußball table outside frequented by employee and regular alike. The furniture is authentically antique from Italy, the beautiful family photos on the wall taken in Italian vineyards might be cliché for an Italian restaurant if they weren't actually real, and you'll never notice but that wasn't a four foot high table they grabbed your silverware from but the first Andreoli family radio- or perhaps even the piano that the chef played and sung on to almost win Italy's equivalent of *American Idol* in his younger years. Just to make things a bit more ridiculous, you should know that you might be sitting at a table next to the millionaire Toscano who owns Andreoli's olive oil plantation and frequently flies in *from* Italy to Andreoli just to "enjoy the best Italian food in the world." If he's not there, you're may be sitting next to half the local police force (always a good sign at any restaurant) or as happens often times, you are the only non-Italian speaker present. This is but a snapshot of what your visit could be like- but if I had to sum up the experience of Andreoli, I would say it combines the serendipity and authenticity you would feel having just stumbled into

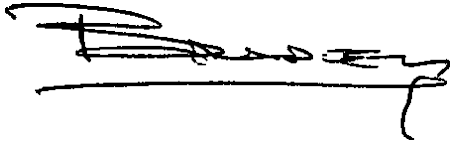
a hidden local favorite as an American tourist in Italy, with the potential hospitality you feel watching the opening credits of *Cheers*. Indeed in time, the people of Andreoli could very well become your extended family and everybody will know your name.

You should be warned, it's not often that I eat out anywhere else anymore and aside from having radically different cuisine, when I go somewhere else I feel like I really just wasted my time and money in comparison with the quality and flavors of Andreoli. Other restaurant friends will ask you where you've been that you've been neglecting their shops in a recession. And you won't consider it obsession because of how natural and commonplace of reactions like this are to Andreoli. For example, the first person I recommended Andreoli to was a friend much more well-travelled than I. As the long-standing VP of one of America's most famous companies, he's had the best food the world has to offer. A quiet man, I first enjoyed a Saturday brunch with him at Andreoli where he had only remarked "it's good!" But that Thursday while talking to him over the phone I asked him if I heard Italian being spoken in the background. "Yeah" he quietly replied, "I'm eating at Andreoli." I remarked that he had obviously really enjoyed our Saturday brunch there. "Yeah" he said sort of embarrassed. Then he mumbled "This is actually my fifth time here since then."

Humorously you should note on your calendar that Andreoli is closed on Sundays.

Enjoy your time Andreoli, I am sure I will see you there.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bradley Graupner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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