

Restaurant
Review

by Debra Barnes



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Debra Barnes is a graduate of the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts. She is an avid gardener and lives in Bow with her husband Randy. Follow her on Instagram: #EAT603

Three Decades of Italian Comfort in Concord

Some restaurants are built around the latest culinary trend. Others earn their reputation the old-fashioned way—by consistently putting well-executed food on the table and giving diners a reason to return. Angelina’s Restaurant in Concord falls into that second category.

Chef and owner Rick Dennison has been at the helm of Angelina’s for 30 years, creating an Italian restaurant that has become a familiar destination for diners looking for a broad menu and traditional flavors.

Angelina’s menu is extensive, offering enough variety of flavors for every appetite. Customer favorites include the Calamari Fritti, Agnolotti Crema Rosa, and Tiramisu. While we did not sample the calamari on this visit, its popularity among regulars certainly makes it worthy of a future order.

Angelina’s sources its pastas and many other items from Italy, while the ravioli is made fresh daily. That distinction matters. Pasta is one of those foods where texture can tell you a great deal about the care that went into the preparation, and freshness is a key part of that equation.

Another detail I appreciate is that the dishes are prepared from scratch, giving diners some latitude when ordering. If you prefer a little more heat—or considerably less—the kitchen can accommodate your palate. That sort of flexibility is a welcome touch, particularly when the goal is to create a meal that suits the individual diner rather than simply delivering a pre-determined plate.

Recently I dined with Annie Kenney, The Bow Times Wine Expert, and we sampled the Linguine Frutti di Mare and Pollo Angelo. The Linguine Frutti di Mare was the stand-out for me. The dish arrived generously populated with fresh calamari, shrimp, clams, and mussels, so there was no shortage of seafood competing for attention. It was a robust, seafood-forward entrée with plenty of character and brightness. Pollo Angelo offered a completely different experience. Comprising of silky olive oil and garlic sauced chicken, sliced sausage, pepperoncini and perfectly cooked penne. It was hearty and well-balanced. It demonstrated the versatility of a kitchen working from a menu designed to appeal to a wide range of tastes.

One of the restaurant’s more notable features is something that is becoming increasingly uncommon: soup or salad are included with many of the entrées. In today’s dining landscape, where even the simplest accompaniments can become an additional charge, this felt refreshingly generous.

Angelina’s turns every plate into a culinary performance. Chef Rick and his long-time team focus is on flavorful, thoughtfully prepared Italian fare, generous selection, and the ability to make a diner feel comfortable ordering exactly what appeals to them.

There is also something to be said for a restaurant that understands its audience. This chef is genuinely passionate about his customers. He personally embraces the countless

special and moving occasions of his dedicated following. They are what is at his core and desire to cook from his heart.

And for anyone planning a visit, take this food editor’s advice: make a reservation! Angelina’s strongly recommends them and so do I! Love to dine at the bar? You can reserve there as well. The restaurant seats 30 and 8 at the bar. Don’t forget to check out

their catering menu. They do ask for a 48 hour notice for all catering requests.

Angelina’s succeeds year after year because it offers something many diners are looking for: a substantial menu, recognizable Italian favorites, fresh pasta preparations, attentive cooking, and enough variety that everyone at the table can find something appealing.



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FABULOUS WINE & SPIRIT PAIRINGS at *Angelina's*

The Wine & Cocktail List here has variety to please most oenophiles, one who likes wine, the specialty cocktails are unique with a couple seasonal surprises. **Chef Dennison** hand selects the list twice a year with **MS Walker** to see what is new, classic, and would pair well with his dishes. He is a lover of Zac Brown Band music, the Z. Alexander Brown Wines are served as House Wines, alongside Italian & Mediterranean selections. Local Spirits a focus on the menu; Mad River Rum, VT, Allen's Cold Brew & Grainger's Deluxe Organic Vodka, MA, and Cold River Blueberry Vodka, ME creating fun mixology creations. Upon my recent visit here with **Chef & Gardner Debra Barnes, Bow Times Food Editor** we had a great time exploring the pairings together, as chef and sommelier friends **always** do.

The Pollo Angelo Pasta with spicy sausage and a garlic EVOO screamed for a bright, crisp white wine - **Tieffenbrunner Pinot Grigio, Alto Adige, Italy \$12 glass/\$48 bottle** - this took the dish to another level, salivating for more. Next up the Fruit de Mare Pasta, a classic seafood and tomato sauce entrée with a glass of red - **Poggio del Concone, Tuscany Blend of Merlot, Sangiovese, and Cabernet Sauvignon \$12 glass/\$44 bottle** - the tannins were soft enough with a pop of acidity.

Lastly, when **Chef tells you, "Save room for dessert,"** that's exactly what you do... a **Seasonal Lemon Tiramisu** appeared before us that was like a heavenly cloud puff with light whipped lemon layers, mascarpone cheese, topped with fresh blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries oozing into cream. Stunning and delicious with the **#1 selling Spritz on the menu - Blueberry Limoncello Spritz** made with Cold River Blueberry Vodka, Limoncello and Mionetto Brut Prosecco with Maine Blueberries & Lemon garnish. I have had the regular Tiramisu with a Chocolate Espresso Martini, but this for summertime, **absolutely divine!** This is a reservation you will want to make, seating is limited as Rick has longtime customers for over 30 years, having the Best Italian food in Concord for 25 years running awarded, you won't want to miss it! ~ Ciao ~ Annie



Annie Kenney is a General Sales Manager for MS Walker Wines & Spirits in Bow, where she has been passionate about her career for the last 23 years. Annie is Wine and Spirits Education Trust Level 2 Certified, and a proud Board Member of the New Hampshire Lodging and Restaurant Association. Annie is a lover of fine wines and spirits and resides in Bow, with her daughter Lexi and her fiancé Brock.

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