

Restaurant Report: How do you say 'Addicting' in Italian?

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'Fascino' doesn't mean addicting in Italian, but it should. It means fascination, charm, allure: all characteristics of this family-run restaurant in Montclair, New Jersey.

Just twenty minutes from New York City, this suburban restaurant earned an 'Excellent' rating from the New York Times when it premiered in 2003. A true family restaurant, when you walk through the door, odds are you'll be greeted by one of the DePersio family. Big brother Anthony runs the front of the house, and his guests love him. Mother Cynthia is the pastry chef, who makes a sinful molten chocolate cake. Younger brother Ryan DePersio is the executive chef, formerly of Jean Georges. Time spent cooking in Paris and Florence can be seen in his elegant dishes.



One bite of the buttery scallops over farro risotto with red pepper foam, and you'll be hooked. If you prefer meat, go for the tender kurobuta pomegranate glazed pork chops. All pastas are handmade, and here is where the chef's Italian background shines through. Ricotta gnocchi, a fluffy take on a heavy favorite, is demanded by returning guests each night. A handmade ravioli of the day includes options such as red beet and goat cheese or braised beef and tallegio cheese.

At Fascino, it is imperative to save room for dessert. There is never a bite left on any plate of Cynthia's warm apple crostata topped with cinnamon gelato. And be

sure to try her signature bread pudding, whatever flavor is on the menu when you arrive. As a BYOB (bring your own bottle) restaurant, you can break out a special bottle from your cellar to accompany the meal.

This restaurant is closed on Sunday for family time, but open the rest of the week for dinner only. Be sure to make a reservation in advance, especially for the weekends. Bookings are accepted 30 days in advance, and if you want a prime Saturday reservation, make your call then.

I'm consistently lured into ordering the five-course tasting menu. These perfect portions showcase all of Ryan's tricks: flavorful appetizers, handmade pastas, fresh fish, tender meats, and of course, dessert. Charismatic servers are the icing on the cake at this Montclair favorite. For Italian fine-dining on the American side of the pond, look no further than Fascino.

For more information, visit the restaurant's website [here](#).