

Café Borgia

A new, larger home in Munster.



BY DONNA KIESLING

After more than 20 years just across the Illinois state line in Lansing, Café Borgia is drawing crowds at its new location in Northwest Indiana.

This summer, Mike and Karen Jesso moved their well-established Italian restaurant into larger digs in Munster (Mike doubles as chef), making changes to the menu and bar and welcoming back loyal clientele.

Thanks to a bigger kitchen, Café Borgia now offers lasagna and risotto, plus more salads and appe-

tizers. New entrees include sea bass and codfish, while the bar serves mixed drinks in addition to beer and wine.

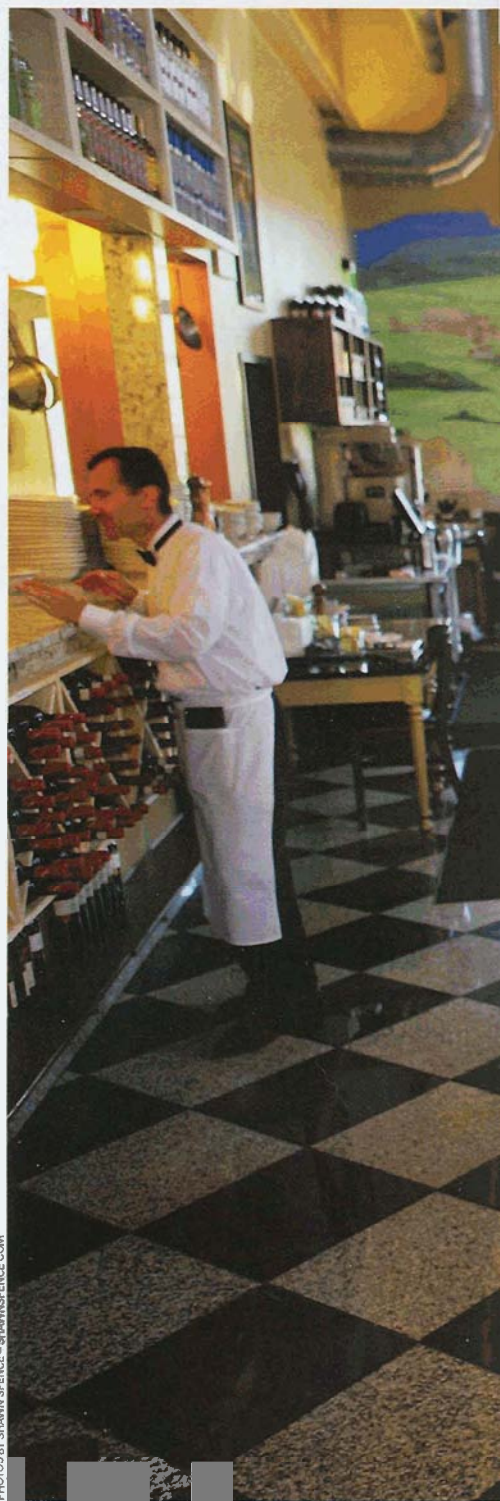
“One of our most popular new pastas is spaghetti and meatballs,” says Karen Jesso. “For dessert, we are pleased with the response to the apple crostada. Customers seem very excited about the new location. There are a handful that miss the old place; however, nobody misses the old (smaller) parking lot!”

The 4,800-square-foot building seats 160 indoors and 40 al fresco. Eight seats are available at the bar, with a few tables and cushioned seats nearby.

High ceilings feature ductwork and suspended red sculpture lights, and diners can watch chefs at work. A huge mural of a seaside village adorns the back wall of the bustling eatery.

To start, we opted for the roasted peppers marinated in virgin olive oil (represented by v.o.o. on the menu) and pan-roasted prosciutto wrapped around mozzarella cheese.

Other starters include calamari, mussels marinara, and three types of bruschetta, along with minestrone and the soup of the day. Special bread spreads run \$2, while other appetizers/small cold plates range from \$3 to \$8.



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Our salad choices were the Caprese, a blend of huge chunks of mozzarella and tomato in a basil vinaigrette (\$7), and the pear and mixed greens, with gorgonzola and pine nuts bathed in raspberry vinaigrette (\$6).

For entrees, we chose cannelloni, a delectable blend of soft sheets of spinach pasta, ground veal, spin-



NEW TO THE MENU:
Lasagna, risotto, spaghetti
and meatballs. Try the new
apples crostada for dessert.

ach and mozzarella in a marinara sauce (\$12), and the mouth-watering stuffed chicken breast, with a blend of four cheeses tucked under the breading and served in a brandy cream sauce (\$14), accompanied by sides of risotto and a mixture of red pepper slices and broccoli. Other pasta selections include rigatoni, angel hair and fettuccine smoked

salmon. Other entree choices include chicken vesuvio romana, roasted lamb shank, pork scallopine and T-bone Florentine.

We managed to squeeze in desserts of flourless chocolate pinwheel cake filled with chocolate ganache (\$6), and zucotto, a chocolate dome cake filled with white chocolate mousse and pistachios served with choco-

late and raspberry sauces (\$6). Both were sweetly satisfying indulgences. A selection of specialty coffees and cordials round out the menu.

Café Borgia is at 10018 Calumet Ave., Munster, and is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. until 11 p.m. Reservations can be made only for a private party room. For information, call 219/922-8889.