

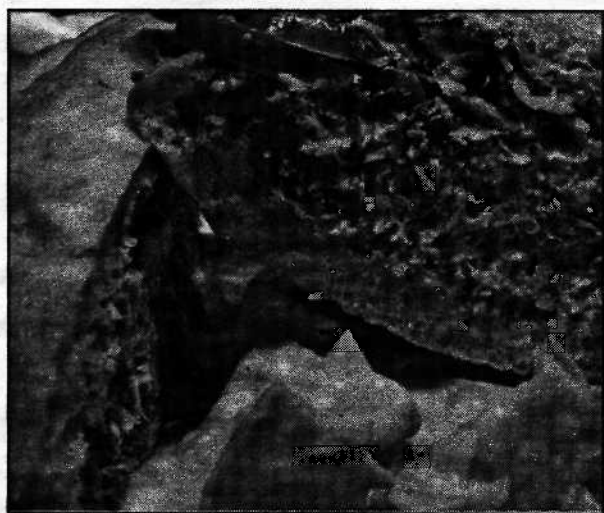
Originality With a Twist

Brasa Premium Rotisserie Restaurant Review

By Elliot Powell

It is time to try something new, time to break away from the monotony. No more take out pizza, a quick burger, or a salad from Target. If you truly want to treat your body and tastes buds, then look no further to Brasa Premium Rotisserie located on Grand Avenue in St. Paul. This old gas station converted into restaurant is cooking up some serious flavor with nothing but the freshest and highest quality ingredients, all locally and regionally grown. Brasa gets its inspiration from the cooking traditions of the Americas and Caribbean and features a menu with superior, yet simplistic dishes. And don't let the Caribbean flare scare you away, they don't mess around with the spicy heat. What a unique menu; other than the hand crafted, pulled-meat sandwiches, this menu is designed for sharing and sampling, and that's exactly what I did.

How this menu is set up gives you a lot of different meal options. The main dishes feature different cuts of meat all slowly cooked and pulled to perfection. This is where the simplicity of the menu comes in, if you order the slow roasted pork, they bring you nothing but a large helping of slow roasted pork. This holds true for every entree they serve up which include: slow roasted pork, smoked beef, pulled chicken, fried catfish, and a rotisserie chicken. Along with the main entrees, Brasa recommends you elect two side dishes as well to complete a meal for one. The side dishes range from fried plantains to macaroni and cheese and everything in between, all with their respected Caribbean and American touch. I went all out during my first experience, leaving little to be tasted. I started off with the slow roasted pork and pulled chicken, and when I say melt in your mouth tender, that would be an understatement. The two dishes were the perfect sized portion for sharing and sampling, allowing for



more Brasa to be consumed. Following that, I took the pulled chicken sandwich. Once again, a hit. The chicken was perfectly tender and juicy and the fresh baked bread surrounding the slow roasted chicken topped it all off. The bread for the sandwich had a perfect textural crunch that got better and better as the meal went on due to the juices of the chicken absorbing perfectly into the bread. And if you can believe



it, this holds true for the smoked beef sandwich. With the fried onions, tangy barbeque sauce and the melted cheddar lying atop, it is hard to think of a more savory, taste bud-electrifying beef sandwich. So I had the slow roasted pork, the slow roasted chicken, the smoked beef sandwich, and the pulled chicken sandwich, but what is a meal without side dishes?

This is where you can really get creative and inventive and broaden your food spontaneity. At first, the side dishes may look like foreign, but be open minded and I promise you won't be disappointed. I went really out of the box with my first taste of a side dish with the macaroni and cheese. But can you blame me? With a restaurant cooking up creations as good as Brasa, there was no doubt in my mind that they would make a killer mac and cheese dish. I was right. If I had to describe this dish in one sentence it would be: like mom made but creamier. Trust me, this is a must the next time you stop in to Brasa.

Along with the mac and cheese, I ordered the creamed spinach with jalapeño and the collard greens with smoked chicken; my parents would have been proud. Thankfully these two side dishes tasted nothing like the greens I was forced to eat as a child. The creamed spinach didn't disappoint its title and the jalapeño pepper mixed in gave it the perfect kick. The collard greens with smoked chicken, although may appear to be seaweed, was the perfect accent to my entrees. It had serious flavor with the smoked chicken adding some extra heartiness to the dish, don't judge a book by its cover, don't judge a dish by its appearance. I recommend the next time you venture to Brasa, try something new and out of the ordinary, because you probably won't be disappointed, and if so, it's just a side dish, right?

My experience at Brasa was a real treat. From the atmosphere, to the staff, to the food, and everything in between, this place does it right. And as summer nears,

keep this restaurant in mind as it has a quaint outdoor patio perfect for a summer evening meal. Whether you are bringing a date, a friend, your family, or yourself, you will leave Brasa with a smile, and so will your wallet. No entree exceeds twelve bucks. So break away from your food monotony, what is there to lose?



Photo Credits: Brasa