

dining & entertainment

**GAZETTE
RESTAURANT
Of The WEEK**
by Teresa Barile

Mezzo Mezzo
31-29 Ditmars Boulevard
Astoria ■ 718.278.0444

MEZZO MEZZO JOINS FINE GREEK CUISINE, RUSTIC CHARM

SINCE MEZZO MEZZO OPENED EIGHT YEARS AGO, IT HAS ATTRACTED AN ECLECTIC CROWD THAT COMES FOR CONSISTENTLY DELICIOUS GREEK STYLE FISH, SEAFOOD AND MEAT DISHES IN A CHARMING, RUSTIC ENVIRONMENT.

This bi-level restaurant features a rough-hewn stone and wood interior, with log support beams that make you feel as if you're in a cozy country home. Lanterns and plants hang from the ceiling while baskets and bottles of wine line shelves over glass windows that look out onto Ditmars Boulevard and 33rd Street. A municipal lot across the street makes parking a snap. In addition to the great food and atmosphere, the lounge upstairs provides an intimate venue for live music and a belly dancer featured each Thursday and Saturday evening, with reserved dinner seat-

or share a bottle of wine and order tender grilled octopus marinated in extra virgin olive oil, vinegar and herbs. New Zealand mussels are steamed in delicious broth that's meant to be soaked up with warm, house made bread (\$9.90). Among the house specialties is crab cakes full of sweet crabmeat and spices and cooked to a golden brown. Grilled calamari stuffed with chopped tomato, feta cheese and herbs is a special treat, as are their irresistible ouzo shrimp, sautéed with Greek liqueur, scallions and a touch of cream. Mezzo's raw bar serves up a seafood martini, a mélange of fresh, cold clams, oysters and shrimp in a chilled martini glass. A simple salad called horiatiki of chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, olives, feta cheese and capers with a zesty dressing offers plenty to share before or during your meal.

Fresh fish such as red snapper, striped bass and porgy is purchased daily and displayed on ice, then marinated in olive oil, lemon and herbs and grilled over wood to produce juicy,

flaky fish that melts in your mouth. Wild Atlantic salmon is grilled over wood and served as is or topped with olive puree. Seafood souvlaki is a generous skewer of swordfish chunks, scallops and shrimp, sprinkled with lemon and served over rice.

Mezzo Mezzo's wood grilling gives T-bone and rib-eye steaks a distinctive flavor and texture and does remarkable things to baby lamb chops.

These delectable lamb chops, four to an order, are served with their own Greek style potato chips for a satisfying meal. Get a side order of horta (dandelion greens) or green beans to share with your companion. Lamb is also served shish-ka-bob style, with flavorful rice.

For dessert, we simply couldn't resist the wedge of baklava dripping with golden honey and walnuts brought to our table. Flaky phyllo dough held this delightful treat together, and it went well with a cup of robust coffee. The service at Mezzo Mezzo is very polite, efficient and accommodating, especially to families.

Mezzo Mezzo is open seven days a week for lunch, dinner and relaxing, with live entertainment on Thursdays and Saturdays. Daily lunch specials are about \$6 to \$10 and include their famous appetizers, juicy burgers, salads and Greek specialties. Lunch or dinner can be delivered for free to your home or office. Come to Mezzo Mezzo for a fine dining and entertainment experience in a cozy, rustic setting.



ing starting at 9 p.m. Owner Charlie Kourakos and his daughter, Maria, are there to greet all their guests.

The restaurant's name, Mezzo Mezzo, is derived from the Greek word, meze, which describes the appetizers that make Hellenic cuisine so appealing. Mezzo Mezzo has been serving their faithful clientele delectable appetizers that have become legendary. Order a cocktail or beer