

Harrah's Rincon Casino & Resort's



Harrah's Rincon Casino & Resort offers something for everyone and has a large draw as a total resort destination. The casino floor offers fast-paced, Vegas-style gaming; the resort's 21-story hotel tower offers 653 rooms, including 21 luxury suites; and the property boasts over 13,500 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space. The resort also offers a casual fine dining experience in Fiore Steak & Seafood.

"The restaurant has a nice, intimate setting," said Shannon Upson, Director of Food & Beverage. "It provides a quiet retreat from the rest of the casino." Positioned just off the casino floor, the restaurant is separated from the gaming action by a glass entry wall. This way, diners can look out on the slot floor without the intrusion of noise. "When guests are dining, they tend to forget that they're actually in a casino. They're just enjoying the experience of a good meal."

The decor in Fiore has a modern flair. The ceiling height above the double doors at the restaurant's entrance measures 40 feet, then tapers down toward the kitchen, accented by wide moldings, inlaid with backlit designs, making for a softly lit setting. The color scheme uses mostly beiges and dark browns, offset by varying shades of burgundy. The overall ambiance provided is soothing and ideal for a relaxing or romantic dinner.

The restaurant only opens for the dinner menu and can accommodate up to 128 guests with tables and booths available. The bar area offers seating for 11 in high-backed, leather stools. Each table and booth features handcrafted glass containers from Italy that house oil lanterns, giving the tables added ambiance. The table settings are custom made for the restaurant, the plates featuring a special design. "This projects the feeling that this isn't a typical steakhouse," said Upson.

Fiore houses a private dining room, as well, which can host up to 20 guests for larger social, family or business functions. The room can even be broken down into four smaller areas so groups

can dine in a private setting. The décor in the private dining room matches the rest of the restaurant, yet is separated from the main dining area by large, hand-carved wooded doors that allow those inside the utmost privacy.

Adding another level of entertainment for its guests, the kitchen in Fiore is divided from the dining room by a glass wall, allowing patrons to view the kitchen staff as they work behind the scenes. "This display kitchen is visible from anywhere in the room and really helps to make the room unique," said Upson. The restaurant even houses an oyster bar where guests can interact with the cooks. "It's a very entertaining environment."

The staff at Fiore takes great care to greet their customers as they walk in, making the level of service very personal. After the guests are seated, their server immediately greets them and the busser sees to it that their water glasses are always full. The table is also topped with an assortment of fresh bread from the restaurant's bakery. The manager of the room moves about the floor during the evening to ensure that every detail has received attention. "The chef will even come out on occasion to greet the customers and see how their meals were," said Upson. "It's a very personal experience for our guests."

Many of Fiore's guests are regular customers, so the staff knows them by name, which adds another element of attention. "Our staff even knows what some of our guests enjoy in terms of their meals and drinks," said Upson. "Our bartender knows what a lot of them enjoy for their drink and will make it while the guests are waiting for their table."

A great deal of time, energy and effort goes into training to maintain the restaurant's extremely high level of service. Training begins with a three-day orientation, during which the staff learns about the property's culture and philosophy, receives training in food service, learns to distinguish when a customer might have had too much to drink, and even the proper temperatures for the foods. The staff does wine and menu tastings regularly to make them more knowledgeable about the products they're selling. "The training, overall, ensures that each staff member is very well rounded," said Upson.

In addition to its atmosphere and service, Fiore offers an award-winning wine list with over 100 selections from a multitude of regions. This list, which ranges in price from \$17 to \$650 per bottle, recently won the Award of Excellence from *Wine Spectator* magazine, which selects wine lists based on how well they accompany their menu and how interesting and broadly appealing their selections are. "We try to offer a wide range of wines to accommodate all types of taste," said Upson.

"We're really trying to reach out and select wines that will exceed guests' expectations."

Fiore's menu is designed with ingredients of the freshest and highest possible quality, featuring certified Angus beef, free-range chicken and seafood that is shipped in fresh daily - the restaurant even ships in Kobe beef on occasion. "Fiore offers a very different approach to the dining experience," said Jon Palsson, Chef de Cuisine. "It's a restaurant that needs to be tried. We take great pride in the ingredients and the staff takes great pride in executing a fantastic product."

The kitchen staffs a crew of eight, which arrives each day between two and three o'clock to prepare for dinner service at five o'clock. Fiore's kitchen is fully self sufficient and everything the restaurant serves is prepared from scratch. "Our lobster bisque is made from scratch, all of our sauces are made from scratch, we make all our own veal stock," said Palsson. "This all takes time to do. In addition to at least three hours of preparation time per day, we have to plan well in advance to create such an excellent product."

Fiore acquires its produce from various parts of the world, including the English Channel, Japan and Australia. The restaurant even ships in fresh Maine lobster on a daily basis. All of the venue's beef is aged for a minimum of 28 days, with the exception of its tenderloins. "We have a pretty regimented

program in order to ensure the freshest quality and the best ingredients available," said Palsson. "We've got a great relationship with all of our vendors and a great culinary team that works really well together."

The top selling entree on Fiore's menu is the filet mignon, which is served in either a 6 oz or 10 oz portion. "The certified Angus beef definitely enhances the product, then we cook it to order," said Palsson. "We feel that salt and pepper are the key ingredients in order to bring out the natural flavors of the product." The most popular dessert is a tie between the crème brûlée and the chocolate silk cake. And since Fiore just brought a new pastry chef on board, the restaurant is looking forward to elevating its already outstanding dessert menu.

With its exceptional service and flavorful menu, Fiore is definitely a restaurant that needs to be experienced. In the nine years since its opening, the restaurant has evolved on almost a daily basis, constantly seeking ways to improve upon its service, atmosphere, and product. "We're always looking to elevate the dining experience for our customers," said Palsson. "We just continue to get better and better." ♣

For more information on Harrah's Rincon Casino & Resort, visit www.harrah.com

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