



HILL-STYLE DINING IN THE BURBS

The farthest reaches of St. Louis also offer fine Italian cuisine

Should you find yourself over the river, through the woods, and with a hankering for some chicken Modiga, fear not. The influence of St. Louis Italian-style cooking has spread far and wide, paisan. —G.M.

1 Agostino's Restaurant

"Mama" Rosa Gabriele, the matriarch of arguably the most storied family in St. Louis' Italian restaurant history, not only oversees her family's operations at Agostino's in Fairview Heights, Ill., but also continues to bake bread and do prep work. The younger generations of the Gabriele family need only to maintain the high standards of their elders, exemplified by timeless classics like penne *alla Norma*, *agnolotti ripieno di aragosta* (lobster-stuffed ravioli), and Linguinette Maremonte (a dish that Rosa's late husband, Agostino, created in 1965). 130 Ludwig, Fairview Heights, Ill., 618-394-1800, agostinoscatering.com.

2 Bella Milano

Bella Milano serves St. Louis Italian-style dishes and calls itself a "fine casual" contemporary Italian restaurant. When it comes to deals around the area, the four-person Family Feast here is a major draw: Originally a Sunday-night special, the \$29.95 meal is now offered for takeout seven nights a week. And now, after 10 successful years, Bella Milano's menu was recently "refreshed." Does that mean the restaurant might swap out the Provel cheese on that famous chicken Milano? Unlikely. 1063 S. Route 157, Edwardsville, Ill., 618-659-2100; 455 Regency Park, O'Fallon, Ill., 618-624-0700; bellamilanos.com.