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International Palette

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March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

### Botte: Italian Kitchen and Bar

a. How were you addressed when you entered into the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated?

On the outside of Botte Italian Kitchen and Bar restaurant, in large, vivid red letters Botte was spelled out and underneath, in large, vivid white colors spelled out Italian Kitchen and Bar on brick walls. One was immediately struck by the calming atmosphere as one entered the restaurant. The room was lit by candles, little lamps that were mounted on the walls, and the huge flat screen TV that was showing a soccer match, behind the bar. The restaurant's hostess who was dressed in black slacks and a white button-down shirt greeted one and their guest a friendly hello and inquired about reservations, which was confirmed. Reservations can be made over the phone or online.

That day was surely packed with business professionals and a few others who were with friends and significant others. One and their guest waited at the booth for about 5 minutes until these business professionals cleared the space. As soon as the space was cleared, the hostess led us to the dining area in the back of the restaurant. One may be seated right away because one had a reservation. While walk-ins were welcome, it took a little longer to get a table.



Figure 1: Botte Italian Kitchen and Bar

b. What are the cultural differences you notice? (*Use class notes*) Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurant or restaurant chains. For example, one can describe but not limited to the sights in the restaurant décor, odors from unusual foods, and sounds from music. One should use all five-senses in this cultural experience.

A big group of people's primary socialization, which include symbols, and meanings, common perceptions, categorization of the outside world, and coordinated activities, is referred

to as culture (Sternquist, lecture 1, 2023). Social class, ethnicity, religion, and gender all have an impact on culture (Sternquist, lecture 1, 2023).

Many wine bottles are put up high and proudly as part of the décor as one can see as one enters the restaurant. In Italy, the cultures of eating and drinking are strongly linked. In Italian culture, wine is designed to complement the food (Feinstein, 2022). Drinking wine was seen as a standard thing and not a luxury in Italian culture compared to American businesses.

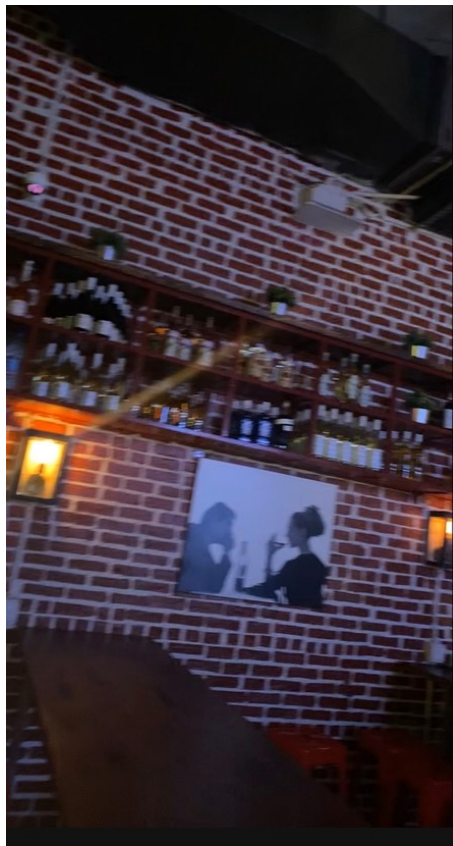


Figure 2: Wine display

One can see how Italians value getting together and spending time with loved ones by the way the restaurant is set up, with their close-seating and large tables which is very different in

American culture. In American culture, it is normal to have *space* between two people in conversation (Sternquist, lecture 1, 2023).

One can hear the sounds of people conversing as they ate. One can also hear the low sounds of music playing. No words were heard but the beat and instruments can be heard. To the right, near the kitchen, one can hear slight clinks of glass dishes. The sounds of doors swooshing can also be heard as the servers who were dressed in black slacks and white button-down shirts, enters and exits with plates of food. The silver utensils were smooth as well as the red dark cloth that covered it as one can feel.

The aroma of pasta, tomatoes, cheese, basil and oregano flavorings fills the air as one can smell as one enters the restaurant. Oregano, basil, marjoram, sage, rosemary and thyme make up the majority of the dry herbs used in Italian seasonings (Rally, 2022). These herbs add flavor, smell, and texture to Italian food (Elle, 2022).

c. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items? Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu. What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu?

Italian and English writing are both present on the Botte menu. All the menu items provide a description of the ingredients. Botte offer several different types of freshly made pastas, pizzas, seafood and meats. The menu included, Salumi and Formaggi (cured meat and cheese), Spaghetti cacio pepe which is spaghetti pasta with pecorino cheese and black pepper, lasagna which is a lasagna pasta in a traditional beef and veal Bolognese sauce and bechamel.

The menu also offered fettucine alla Bolognese sauce which is a fettuccine pasta in a traditional beef and veal Bolognese sauce.

Pizza including margherita pizza which ingredients include san Marzano tomatoes, fresh mozzarella and basil, Calzaone classic which is stuffed with ricotta cheese and mozzarella cheese and Napoletana which includes san Marzano tomatoes, fresh mozzarella and Basil.

The menu also offers Pesce E Carne (Fish and meat). Some of the items listed are pollo alla parmigiana which is a panko crusted chicken breast, melted mozzarella with rigatoni pomodoro, and pollo alla griglia which is a grilled organic chicken breast with mixed greens, cherry tomatoes, pickled onions.

One ordered a chicken parmigiana with fettucine noodles. The chicken was bursting with flavors of oregano and garlic, and the mozzarella cheese topped on the chicken added the perfect touch. The pasta sauce was saucy, and the fettucine noodles were cooked to perfection. Overall, the food was freshly made and tasted amazing.

The unusual items on the menu was a burger, which is popular in American culture.



Figure 3: Chicken Parmigiana

d. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like?

Flat bread was offered. The bread was baked, topped with butter, garlic and cut up into even pieces. A number of insalate (salads) are also offered on the menu including arugula e pere which ingredients include, arugula, pear, gorgonzola and balsamic dressing. Also offered is, insalata di Cesare which is a classic romaine, croutons and homemade Caesar dressing and insalata di cavolo which is kale, apple, shaved parmesan, shaved almond and balsamic dressing.

The menu also provides sweets like panna cotta, which is made of sweet cream, gelatin, and tiramisu, which is a coffee- flavored dessert.

e. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant?

Their menu offers cocktails of spritz, martini and negroni. Wines available were montepulciano, pino grigio, rose or prosecco and beers such as Allagash white, lagunitas ipa, sixpint crisp, and peroni.

American franchise restaurants do not serve authentic Italian cuisine and beverages, which are essential to the authentic Italian experience.

f. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography (*Use class lecture notes*)? (i.e. spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices & fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from country this culture's food is best known.

*Cultural geography* refers to how people live their lives in different regions of the world (Sternquist, lecture 1, 2023). Italians make up the majority ethnic group in Italy, making about 95% of the country's population. Albanians, Romanians, Ukrainians, and other Europeans, Africans, and other minorities make up the remaining 5% of the population ("Ethnic groups in Italy, 2023"). Italy's national tongue is Italian. Practically everybody in Italy speaks Italian, but, there are a variety of dialects and other languages that are spoken by native Italians such as Albanian, French, German, Greek, Catalan etc(Barrera, 2017).

Italian culture is well reflected at Botte Italian Kitchen and Bar. On the plate and in the glass, one can see Botte honors Italian tradition and culture. The menu provides dishes from

various parts of Italy. Pasta, cheese, veggies, meats, and wine are the staples of the Italian cuisine (Ratini, 2021). Italians use meals to strengthen ties with friends and family and view food as an integral aspect of their daily existence (Ratini, 2021).

Regional differences exist in the food consumed and produced throughout Italy. Northern meals are typically lighter and contain more veal (“Italy”, n.d). Italian cuisine in the south is frequently heavier. Spaghetti and pizza are popular in central Italy, while fish, potatoes, rice, sausage, and pasta are popular in the north. Tomatoes are a tradition in the south, whether they are served fresh or cooked into a sauce with other ingredients like capers, peppers, olive oil, artichokes, egg plants and ricotta cheese (“Italy”, n.d) Food serves as a method of preserving relationships between family and friends in Italian culture (“Italy”, n.d).

There are numerous national holidays because Italians enjoy celebrating. Christian holidays, such as Easter and Christmas, are celebrated in Italy together with other holidays, such as liberation Day on April 25<sup>th</sup> and Festa Della Republic on June 2<sup>nd</sup> (“ Top Italian National Holidays: Christmas, Carnevale & Beyond, 2014).

## Economic Geography

Italy is a country in Southern Europe. Italy primarily consist of Sicily and Sardinia, two sizeable islands in the Mediterranean Sea (Evason, 2017). To the north, Slovenia, France, Switzerland, Austria and the Alps forms it borders (Evason, 2017). Being located in the Mediterranean Sea allows Italy to have more access to exports and imports.

The distribution of industrialization and prosperity is referred to as *economic geography*



(Sternquist, lecture 1, 2023). Italy is a member of the *Group of Seven* (Sternquist, lecture 2023).

This is because, Italy is one of the most developed countries in the world. Economically, Italy is in a good place. Italy maintains its strong industrial performance, placing third in Europe for trade surplus (Maggiore, 2017). Wine and food are among Italy's biggest exports. Due in great part to the country's climate, which is suitable for viticulture, Italy is the best place for wine production (Poskitt, 2018). There are fertile plains and hot, dry coastlands in the South where figs, almonds, and olives are grown ("Italy", 2022).



Figure 4: Google map of Italy

g. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses – you smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc....) What are the employees, such as hostesses or wait staff wearing? Please use Eicher-Roach-Higgins (1992) article to define dress and answer appropriately.

Dress is described as modifications of the body and supplements to the body (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992). In social interactions, clothing serves as an effective medium of communication and shapes identities (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992).

As one can see, the hostess was dressed in a *fitted* black button-down shirt and *fitted* black slacks that *suspended* at her waist all the way down to her ankles. She *adorned* her ears with gold earrings that dangled from her ears. As one can see, she was professionally dressed for work and it wasn't obvious of her cultural background. One's waiter was a young man dressed professionally for work in a white *fitted* button-down shirt, *loose fitting* black slacks with red suspenders that held his pants up. As one can see, all hostess and wait personnel were dressed professionally in black slacks and a white or black button down shirt.

Given that only one gets a brief interaction, one cannot detect any taste, sound, or touch associated with their clothing. Any odors from the hostess or wait staff perfumes or colognes was drowned out by the aroma of herbs and sauces coming from the kitchen.

h. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the *LA Times* or *Houston Chronicle*). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality and price and should range from A-F ("A" being the best). Explain why you chose this rating. Be thorough and detailed in your explanations. Be sure to write at least 2 paragraphs.

Overall, Botte Italian Kitchen and Bar earns an A. The food was an A, it was really tasty and filling, so one definitely got their money's worth. The service was an A, the hostess gave one a warm welcome. One's waiter was pleasant and correctly placed one's order. The decoration receives an A, it gave one a peaceful and calming feeling and allowed one to be fully immersed in the Italian culture.

Cleanliness received an A. The silverware was nicely wrapped, and the table was spotless. The food's spices were exploding with flavor and it tasted fresh. Overall, authenticity and quality earn an A. One got tasty and filling food for under 150 dollars, as a result, price receives an A.

*i.* What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multi-cultural experience in a class discussion?

One learns that a restaurant's menu, drinks, and even the way it's set up may all aid in realizing and better comprehending a country's values and culture. Italians value wine, which was immediately apparent when entering the restaurant from the exhibition of wine bottles hanging from the wall. Italians emphasize intimacy and spending quality time with loved ones, as evidenced by the near proximity of the tables. Also, which seasonings and flavors are valued from the aromas of the cuisines, which from Italy includes oregano and thyme.

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Figure 1: Tyshae, Greene, “Botte Italian Kitchen and Bar”

Figure 2: Tyshae Greene, “Wine display”

Figure 3: Tyshae Greene, “Chicken Parmigiana”

Figure 4: Google map of Italy

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