

# Italian masterpiece in bustling bakery

## Il Fornaio

55 Kilbarrack Road, Raheny, Dublin  
5. Phone 8320277.

**I HAVE a thing about bakeries that makes me feel ill.**

While most people rejoice in the warm smell of freshly baked bread, unhappy memories of nightwork in a northside doughnut dive bring me out in a cold sweat when the word 'yeast' is mentioned.

With this in mind, I find myself heading across the Liffey by taxi to Il Fornaio – Italian for the b-b-b-aker – to confront my phobia.

This place has been recommended by

### The bill for two

Bruschetta x 2.....	£6.80
Gnocchi.....	£4.50
Rigatoni.....	£4.95
Bottle house red.....	£9.50
Service.....	£1.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£27.75</b>

## metro Eating Out

**Alan Murphy**

a friend and I am intrigued by the idea of bakery to which some seating has been added and which serves, by all accounts, top-notch Italian food.

We arrive at the smart premises just off the coast road in Raheny at nine o'clock and immediately my fears subside. Il Fornaio is modern, brightly lit and spotlessly clean. There is a large counter which runs the length of the room and there's a man making pizzas while some young girls clear up the day's deli selection (the stuffed tomatoes look particularly inviting).

Along the left-hand side of the room there's a long line of shelving which is home to bags of dried pasta and hundreds of bottles of wine. Beside these there's around six tables in a line and we

help ourselves.

There are small take-away style menus on the table and we take a look at the wide variety of bruschettas, pizzas and pastas on offer.

A friendly young girl takes our order and brings back a bottle of house red – a nicely balanced cabernet (its name, to be honest, escapes me) which is exceptional value at £9.50.

There isn't much hanging around here and after a short wait our bruschetta is presented on rectangular stone platters. These starters, whopping slices of freshly baked crusty bread, look like meals in themselves. Mine, bruschetta gamberetti, is smothered with a thick layer of mozzarella and prawns, which were delicately flavoured and didn't overpower the palate. Wife's bruschetta funghi porcini was almost identical except that the prawns were substituted by mushrooms and it was equally exquisite.

On this visit Il Fornaio is busy with pizza orders and deli customers. A well-kept local woman also drops in, apparent for no other reason than to practise her Italian and there is a lovely, informal

village-style atmosphere to the place.

With perfect timing, our pasta courses arrive in little white bowls and we are immediately impressed. My piping hot rigatoni all'amatriciana is superb: the short pasta tubes are perfectly al dente and the thick tomato sauce carries tasty morsels of bacon and veg. Wife echoes my thoughts as she remarks that hers is the best pasta she's had outside Il Primo. I try her gnocci al pomodoro and see why she's so impressed. Her fat little pasta dumplings are, again, perfectly cooked and smothered in another sinfully rich tomato sauce and it's topped with grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and basil.

At this stage it's getting quiet and we resist the temptation of coffee and dessert in favour of scuttling back across town for a last drink in the local.

The best part comes when we receive the bill. £27.75 for a meal for two with wine is excellent value by any standards, but when the food is this good it's astonishing. The price includes service charge but we leave an extra couple of quid for the friendly and attentive service.

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