

FLORIDA WEEKLY CUISINE



PHOTO BY JACEK GANCARZ

The terrace at The Restaurant at the Norton Museum offers al fresco dining with views of the museum's sculpture garden.

SCOTT'S THREE FOR

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Places for al fresco dining

A trio worth noting

1 THE RESTAURANT AT THE NORTON

Norton Museum of Art, 1450 S. Dixie Highway, West Palm Beach; www.norton.org. Open 11 a.m.-3 p.m. daily except for Fridays, when it's open until 9 p.m.

You can enjoy a classic club sandwich or a burger at The Restaurant at the Norton. But why would you want to do that when the restaurant is offering Mexican-inspired dishes in honor of the Frida Kahlo, whose art is featured in a blockbuster exhibition right now at the museum? Soup is on with a calabaza bisque, with sweet notes courtesy of agave, and warmed with ancho chilies. There also are shrimp tacos and a Oaxacan mole chicken that sound delightful. Enjoy them indoors or outside on the terrace, which overlooks the sculpture garden.

2 FRIGATE'S WATERFRONT BAR & GRILL

400 U.S. 1, North Palm Beach; 561-855-7497 or www.frigatesbar.com.

This tropical-themed sports bar, on U.S. 1 just north of Northlake Boulevard, offers a mix of bar fare and seafood for lunch and dinner. There's a large patio area on the south side of the restaurant facing the Earman River, which leads out to the Intracoastal Waterway. Curbside and dockside pickup are available.



FLORIDA WEEKLY FILE PHOTO

The "Greek" Chicken Paillard from The Cooper, at PGA Commons.

3 THE COOPER

PGA Commons, 4610 PGA Blvd., Suite 100, Palm Beach Gardens; 561-622-0032 or www.thecooperrestaurant.com.

The Cooper may be one of the best combinations of casual and fine dining along the PGA Corridor. My entrée pick: The "Greek" Chicken Paillard, essentially a Greek salad served atop a flattened chicken breast. Good, and good for you. Or, opt for the burger, one of the finest anywhere, with a special beef blend, aged Vermont cheddar, lettuce, tomato and The Cooper's creamy secret sauce. ■

— Scott Simmons, ssimmons@floridaweekly.com

THE DISH: Highlights from local menus

The Dish: Arrabiata pizza

The Place: Prezzo, PGA Commons, 4250 PGA Blvd., Palm Beach Gardens; 561-429-6938 or www.eatprezzo.com.

The Price: \$17

The Details: Prezzo says it introduced the wood-fired pizza oven when the restaurant first opened in 1989 in Boca Raton.

That sounds about right to this writer, who remembers the hullabaloo that surrounded the opening of that first location so many decades ago. The restaurant proved popular enough that it opened a location in Palm Beach Gardens back in the day.

South Florida cuisine has come a long way since the 1980s — Prezzo also was among the first restaurants to offer pizzas made with high-quality ingredients. Fortunately for diners, that commitment

has not changed.

The restaurants closed years ago, but reopened recently, first in Boca Raton, and now, at the eastern end of PGA Commons, in a spot that for years was home to Vic & Angelo's, then Scusi Trattoria.

The weather was dreary the day I visited Prezzo for a late lunch.

But damp atmospheric conditions didn't keep Prezzo from turning out a crisp, lighter than air crust on a pizza topped with Calabrian chili pomodoro, pepperoni, mozzarella, fresh basil and basil-infused extra virgin olive oil. Indeed, you could smell that intoxicating basil as the server brought the pizza to the table.



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I might have liked a little more heat in my tomato sauce, but each bite proved satisfying — enough so that I'm looking forward to my next visit.

Service was friendly and efficient, and

there's plenty of outdoor seating at just about all the restaurants at PGA Commons. ■

— Scott Simmons, ssimmons@floridaweekly.com