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## Diner's Journal

By BRYAN MILLER

### Va Bene

There is something appropriately scriptural-looking about the parchment menu at Va Bene, a new kosher Italian restaurant at 1589 Second Avenue, between 82d and 83d Streets, in Manhattan. Judging by the nightly crowds, Va Bene is a much needed addition to kosher dining, which is not known for rakish settings. Va Bene is indeed an attractive place.

And while it is by no means the best Italian restaurant in this competitive neighborhood, it offers some dining experiences that are not widely available in kosher establishments. Va Bene is owned by the Lattanzi family, which also has a glatt kosher Italian restaurant called Tevere 84, at 155 East 84th Street, among other establishments in Manhattan.

The dining room at Va Bene is done in sponged ocher walls with shiny red lacquer trim and restrained lighting. You start with garlic-loaded shards of pita bread while perusing the menu. The vegetable antipasto plate is a good appetizer, featuring baby fried artichokes, asparagus, roasted eggplant and melted mozzarella (\$7.95).

The mixed green salad is generous and fresh, although the dressing has too much vinegar (\$5.95). A lentil soup with pasta rings was satisfying (\$6.95). Among the pastas, penne tossed with tomato, radicchio, garlic, basil, parsley and onions was agreeable, but a good dose of hot pepper and a touch of salt would have brought it to life (\$14.95). The same applied to the pasta roll filled with ricotta and spinach (\$14.95). A selection of kosher wines is available. Va Bene serves dinner 5 to 11 P.M. Monday to Thursday; closed Friday; on Saturday dinner begins after Shabbos and runs to 11 P.M.; 3 to 10 P.M. Sunday. American Express accepted. Telephone: (212) 517-4448. The Changing Scene

OPEN: Harry Cipriani, 781 Fifth Avenue, at 59th Street, in the Sherry-Netherland Hotel in Manhattan. Mr. Cipriani had a restaurant in the same space from November 1985 to August 1987 but closed it after a dispute with Trusthouse Forte, the landlord at the time.

The building is now under private management. Harry Cipriani serves breakfast, lunch and dinner daily; telephone: (212) 753-5566.

Mr. Cipriani also owns Bellini by Cipriani on Seventh Avenue near 50th Street.