



# Ooh la la!

## La Cantina 44 - A Mediterranean Haven

La Cantina 44 is the best kept secret in east Leeds. The relaxed and friendly café style atmosphere has kept the place bursting at the seams since it opened six years ago.

As we entered the family run restaurant based in Crossgates, the tables were jammed with an eclectic mix of people having birthday parties, work nights out or simply enjoying a home cooked meal after a hard days work. People were sitting on the terrace enjoying the sun and having a glass of wine, the atmosphere was chilled and happy.

We were seated at an intimate table for two and were immediately served with fresh bread and olives by the proprietor Naki. We ordered a bottle of Chianti and he whizzed off the way waiters do from the Med, back in a flash with our red wine.

The wide range of food on the menu was enough to suit any palette. Whilst the couple next to us scoffed down a pizza with chips, we decided to choose a more sophisticated dish. With a choice of Spanish, Greek and Italian on the menu we were really spoiled for choice.

The bruschetta and garlic mushrooms arrived quickly, which were suitable portions for a starter and great value for money. The garlic mushrooms were served in a soup bowl in

a creamy tomato sauce, it seemed an odd combination but the flavours were suited perfectly, the bruchetta was light and had a wonderful balance of basil and oil so not to overwhelm the fresh tomatoes. By the time we had finished the starters the restaurant was full and bustling. Enjoying the atmosphere, I sang along as the lights dimmed and the enthusiastic waiters put on quite a show to embarrass the birthday girl by producing a cake and a song.

Our mains swiftly arrived. The moussaka, a potato and aubergine lasagne style dish with mince meat, was only a disappointment because I am such a moussaka snob. With a little less cheese and a more aubergine it would've been the perfect dish. The large dish was spilling over with fussilli and filled with crunch vegetables, with the perfect amount of basil seasoning.

Finishing off the meal with two cappuccinos & some Italian Ameretti almond biscuits, we left with our stomachs suitably full & surprisingly not too much of a dent in our wallets.

**La Cantina 44, 1a Austhorpe Road, Crossgates, Leeds LS15 8QR**  
**Tel: 0113 3680066**  
**In a nutshell: It's like dining in the Med, but in LS15. Bellissimo!**



### WHAT WE ATE

#### Starters

**BRUSHCETTA (V) £3.75**  
 Sliced homemade bread topped with chopped tomato, red onion, olive oil & basil

**FUNGHI AL AGLIO £4.25**  
 Baked baby button mushrooms in a creamy garlic sauce

#### Main

**MOUSSAKA £7.50**  
 Greek style moussaka

**FUSSILLI VEGETARIAN (V) £6.95**  
 Spiral pasta tossed with sun blushed tomatoes, mushrooms, aubergine & fresh basil



**Adele Goldberg of Creative Catering**

### Magnificent Mediterranean Roast Chicken

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 large Roaster (approx 4lb)
- 2lb of potatoes peeled & quartered
- Handful of fresh parsley
- Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper
- 2 lemons
- Olive oil
- 1lb chorizo sausage (avail in kosher delis)
- Handful of black olives

#### METHOD

Preheat oven to 200°C. Place potatoes & lemons in a pan of salted water, boil for 5 mins & drain. Lay potatoes in centre of an oiled baking dish. Prick lemons all over & place inside the chicken with chopped parsley & stalks. Place chicken over potatoes, drizzle with olive oil & season well with salt, pepper & remaining parsley. Cut the chorizo into ¼ inch thick angled slices & arrange over the top with the olives. Cover dish loosely with tinfoil & bake in the oven for 1 & 1/2 hrs. 15 mins before serving remove foil to allow the chicken to brown & the potatoes to crisp. Let the chicken rest for a few mins. Carve & pour over the juice from the baking tray. Serve with roast vegetables or salad.