

TASTING TABLE DC

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Comeback King

Chef Fabio Trabocchi triumphs at his new Fiola



Fiola's veal chop

Fabio Trabocchi can't invite us all to his house, so he's bringing us home to his new restaurant.

His new Fiola in Penn Quarter is an edible homecoming for the energetic Italian chef and his welcoming wife, Maria, after several years in Manhattan.

The handsome dining room was inspired by the couple's villa in Spain and incorporates stone walls, plus shell-inspired floor tiles. Maria runs the front, greeting guests like old friends, while Fabio peeks through vintage curtained windows to check on diners.

Fiola's food tastes like it was born of a superlative family affair. Trabocchi brought in his longtime pasta expert to handle the noodles, rolling spaghetti for bowls of creamy *cacio e pepe* (\$18), and thick tubes of *paccheri* (\$24) to entwine with burly oxtail.

Giant chunks of lobster claw and tail burst through transparently thin, wonton-style lobster ravioli (\$28). Mom's cooking it's not. But this offering has a different familiarity: The ginger-tickled dish was a signature at Trabocchi's previous area restaurant, Maestro.

Homey servings of meat include a grilled *tagliata* with bright salsa verde and arugula (\$30), and a hulking veal chop (\$30) with prosciutto and sweet Alba hazelnuts.

As at the family dinner table, you'll also get your vegetables. The daily-changing menu is verdant with English peas, favas, asparagus and artichokes.

Fiola, 601 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (entrance on Indiana Ave.); 202-628-2888 or fioladc.com