

dining | **Weekend Pass**

The Italian Nod

Chef Fabio Trabocchi tips his toque to his homeland with Fiola

New Spot

Chef Fabio Trabocchi became a James Beard Award winner during his time at Maestro in Tysons Corner, but he left for New York City in 2007 to open the Italian eatery Fiamma. That venture closed down a little more than a year after it opened, but Trabocchi didn't lose his passion for the cuisine of his homeland. Now he has returned to the area that made him famous — in Penn Quarter, this time around — with the chic-yet-casual Fiola, which opened in April.

The Vision: “Our menu must reflect the seasons. That’s been the principle behind Italian cooking for the last 500 years,” Trabocchi says. The offerings rotate based on market availability, so asparagus may show up in several dishes one day, and sea urchin may take center stage the next. “The creativity starts when the ingredients come in,” Trabocchi says. “They naturally suggest what ends up on the table.”

Eats: The menu offers Mediterranean classics and some surprises. The La Misticanza salad (\$12) is a snapshot of spring, featuring fresh local greens lightly dressed and dappled with little yellow and purple flowers, topped by a crostini with whipped ricotta cheese. Tuna crudo (\$16) is elevated to new heights with micro-greens, slivers of green olives, Meyer lemon segments, tomatoes and slender ribbons of fresh basil. When it comes



Mixed greens and a ricotta-coated crostini make up Fiola's La Misticanza salad.



Fiola's seven-layer Vincisgrassi lasagna is packed with veal and prosciutto.

Atmosphere

Contemporary modern design is accented with rustic, rural features such as a gray stone wall and opaque, leaf-filled columns. The crowd is equally diverse, with suited politicians dining alongside casually dressed 20-somethings.

to an entrée, try the Vincisgrassi lasagna (\$26), an individually prepared, seven-layer tower packed with veal and prosciutto. Equally inviting are the lobster ravioli (\$30) with a cream sauce. Fiola's fare is surprisingly light, so you'll be able to indulge your sweet tooth with dessert. Have the tart of the day; a recent option was a smooth vanilla and brown butter tart sprinkled with powdered sugar and paired with a toffee dipping sauce (\$7).

Drinks: Fiola has nearly 150 wines that hail from the land of the Lamborghini, with another 30 from elsewhere in the world. If you want a brew from “the boot,” you can grab bottles of Peroni, Moretti and Baladin (\$6-\$12). There's also an extensive cocktail menu; a nice option is the light spritzer with Aperol (orange liqueur), club soda and Prosecco (\$11). NEVIN MARTELL

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



New on the Menu: In connection with the musical “Wicked” (showing at the Kennedy Center through Aug. 21), the Roof Terrace Restaurant (2700 F St. NW; 202-416-8555, RoofTerracerestaurant.com) has added a pistachio mousse cake (\$11), left, to its dessert menu. Available throughout the show's run, the almond joconde sponge cake — a decorative sponge cake named after the “Mona Lisa,” which is also known as “La Joconde” in France — makes for an enchanted finish to a night at the theater. DARONA WILLIAMS (EXPRESS)

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