

# Add Italian Friday lunches at 95 Keerom to your to-do list

 By Leigh Andrews

1 Mar 2018

Those of us who work in or around the CBD but travel long distances to the Cape suburbs at the end of the workday can rejoice at the chance to finally incorporate corporate (or not) Italian Friday business lunches at 95 Keerom - formerly only open for dinner - into our bustling schedules.



95 Keerom exterior. All images provided.

I'd dined at Giorgio Nava's newest addition, 95 at Parks, when it first began its six-course 'Italian Experience' run in August last year, so knew I was in for a real Milanese-style treat when I was invited to sample the new Friday lunch fare at flagship 95 Keerom.

I raved about that ravioli and gnocchi for days, but click through to the review embedded below if it's slipped your mind. I'll wait...



## Savouring Giorgio Nava's new Italian Experience at 95 at Parks

Leigh Andrews 8 Aug 2017



Right, now that we're all on the same page, you'll understand why my expectations for this lunch were so high! Formerly just a dinner venue, and given the fact that I've usually already made my commute back home by the time it opens for dinner, lunch sounded like a win. Even better? It was a cold, rainy day – rare in Cape Town given the drought, and to me, that's always the perfect conditions for a filling Italian feast.

## All things classic, rustic and authentic at 95 Keerom

With lunch only on offer since the end of January, and only on Fridays at that, I was pleasantly surprised at how many tables were occupied – it was a pleasing mix of relaxed business lunch (it was a Friday, after all), office celebration (Keerom Street is in the heart of Cape Town's legal district so there are stacks of law firms in the vicinity), and happy tourists who had taken the right turn while exploring the city and ended up raving over the crayfish pasta.



Chef Giorgio Nava. All images provided.

Once you hit the end of Keerom Street, you're there. The decor is warm, open and inviting, and unchanged since the restaurant's opening some 15 years ago, in the building circa 1682 that originally housed the stables and slave quarters of the Company Gardens. Open the large, wooden door and you're swiftly guided past the bar and smaller dining rooms downstairs and up the staircase, where any table is a good table.

Many of the original elements, including the façade and brick walls, have been saved in the restoration process. There's lots of natural light beaming in and you truly feel in touch with nature – that's probably because of the tree older than the venue itself bursting through the middle of it, making this the feel like the ideal spot to relax, catch up and unwind.

“ Most amazing authentic Italian lunch at [@95Keerom](#), tick - Yes, they do Friday lunches now! 💎💎 selection of scene and starter shots... [pic.twitter.com/t9oK4zTkKh](https://pic.twitter.com/t9oK4zTkKh)— Rambling Litchi (@Leigh\_Andrews) [February 9, 2018](#) ”

All that warm wood and glass makes 95 Keerom the classic setting foodies are looking for 2018, where we're seeing a move back towards understated elegance, with the food the star of the show, as Nava insists on only the highest quality ingredients and honest, old-school Italian flavours at their best. And boy, did this food ever steal the show!

First up, the impeccable unobtrusive service meant before we'd even had time to decide what we wanted from the food menu we were met with still water and a bread plate featuring artisanal delights. From the bread alone you can sense Nava's respect for original Italian recipes.

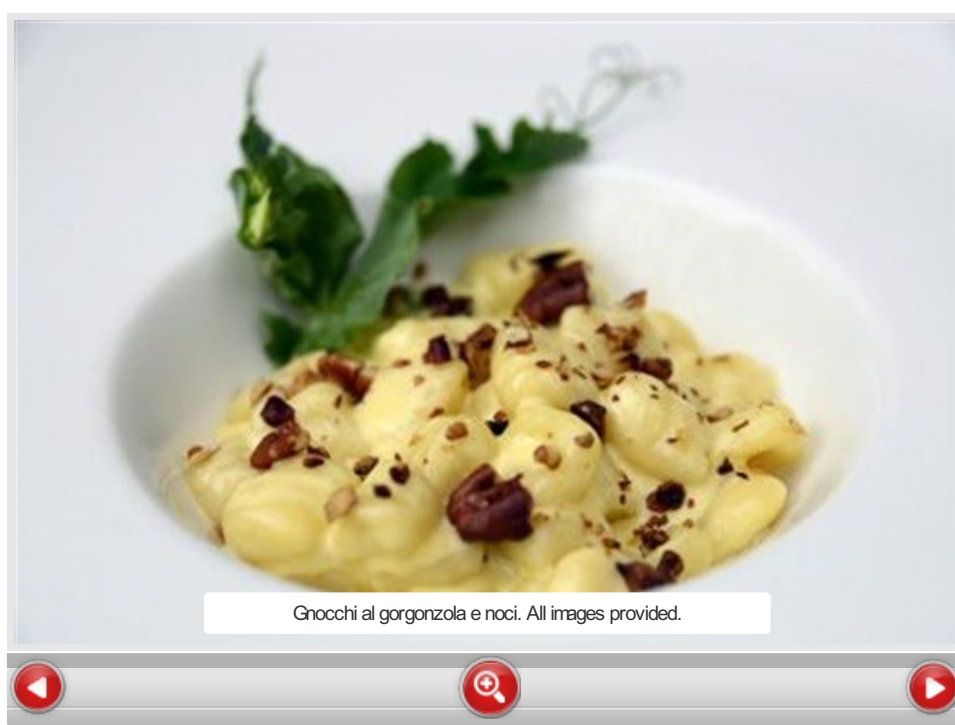
“ Baked fresh twice daily, these included their skinny, crunchy, pretzel-style Parmesan-crusting breadsticks, crispy focaccia and their showstopper ciabatta that's still made from a 150-year-old Milanese mother dough. It's just begging to be dipped in a mix of olive oil and balsamic, with sprinkles of pepper and salt from the tiny table-top bowls. ”

I squinched up the bread to hold every last drop!

## Paper-thin carpaccio perfection

My actions were a form of distraction as I actually couldn't decide what to order. Everything on Nava's menu is fresh, authentic, unpretentious and just delicious. So when starters arrived I couldn't pass up a chance to try a forkful of the butter-soft, creamy Caprese salad, with a heavenly ball of burrata mozzarella, finely chopped tomato, capers and basil on crispy, crunchy bread.

Then it was time to devour my own soothing starter: The *Gli Asparagi alla "95"* or 'asparagus salad' is just that – green asparagus spears and rocket, with slivers of parmesan resting on a bed of creamy Hollandaise sauce, with the bright green and pale yellow colours and tastes blending as the perfect mouthful.



Gnocchi al gorgonzola e noci. All images provided.

Our starter experience set the scene for a delicious afternoon. For mains, we went with the '*Il carpaccio 95*' – an obvious choice, as Nava was one of the first to introduce such a selection of fresh and seared beef and fish carpaccio to Cape Town diners – there's even a pineapple-citrus version for dessert!

There are eight savoury carpaccio offers on the menu, so we may well need to return to try the others, but I'm convinced it was named 'the 95' as it's one of the dishes Nava and staff can be most proud of. It arrived at our table looking picture-perfect and ready for its close-up, having been plated beautifully with lacy red meat slices fanned around the edges, dollops of their homemade mayonnaise sauce, chopped rocket and more of that amazing pale Parmesan. It was a delicious reconstruction of the Italian flag.

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Presenting the #carpaccio95 at @95keerom by @giorgio\_\_nava. #delizioso 💎💎💎💎💎 In case the emojis dont say it all, hold tight. All the words coming to my @bizcommunity review! #foodie #Italianfood #fridaylunch

A post shared by [Leigh Andrews \(@ramblinglitchi123\)](#) on Feb 9, 2018 at 5:47am PST

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Tipping the richness scale through the roof, my butternut ravioli pockets were also just gorgeous. I happily made my way through four large, handmade folds of ravioli dressed with sage butter, finely covered with parmesan and filled with a velvety, butternut-ricotta filling.

## Feasting on fondants: Italian dessert heaven

Chef-proprietor Giorgio Nava himself then walked over the welcome us and check that all was meeting our expectations. By that point we were so satisfied we could only smile and make appreciative noises, as we knew dessert was next.

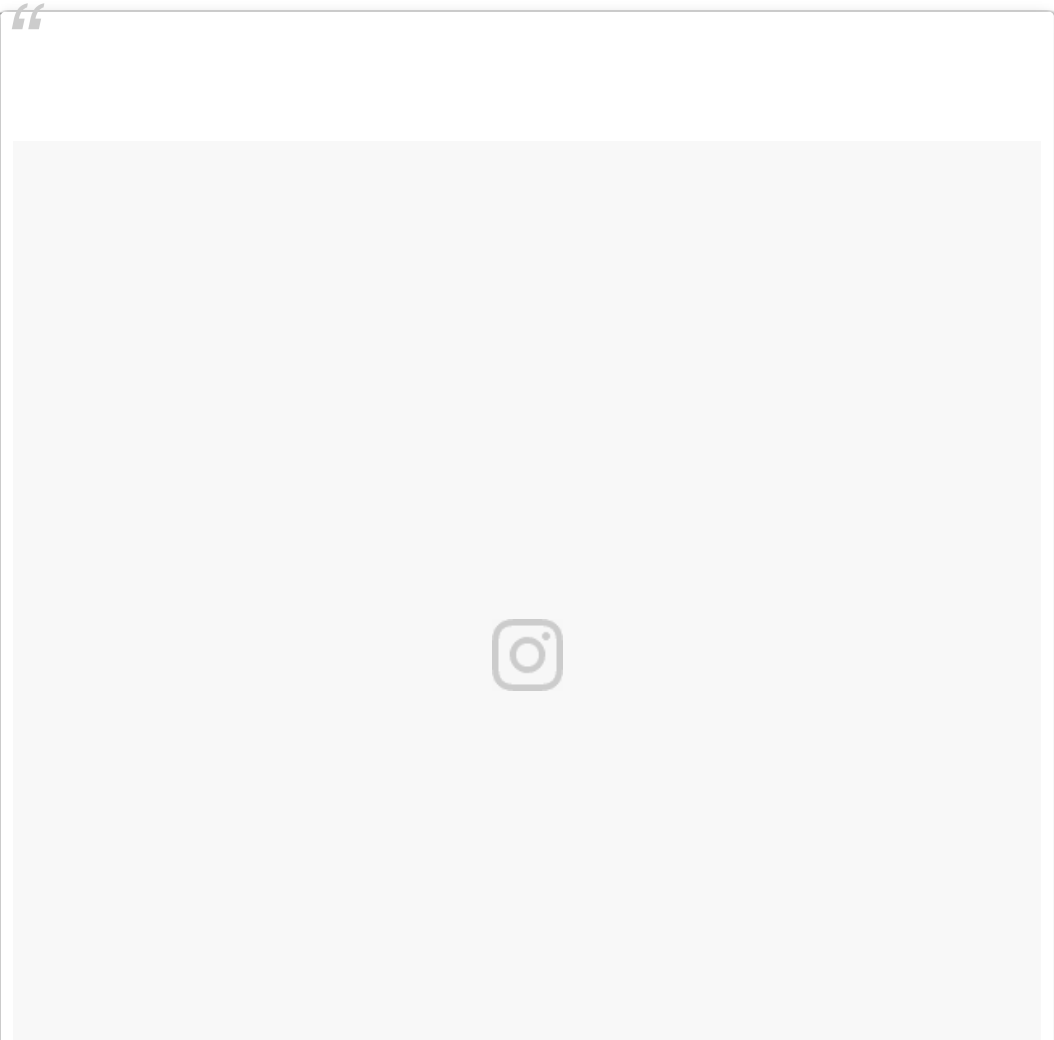
With Nava's chocolate fondant famous the world over, obviously that's what I was having – and when I saw the '2 *Fondenti al Cioccolato*' option, I was sold. So I averted my eyes from the delectable portion of tiramisu and the *rum baba* and stuck with my dessert guns. Boy, am I glad I did.



Tiramisu. All images provided.

Served fresh from the oven and warned of the 15-minute waiting time, those fondants were pure mounds of delight, filled with warm, liquid centres. I merrily made my way through the white one bursting with white rum, and the dark ball of pure chocolate.

Served with fresh gooseberries that added a tart hit and the creamiest ball of *gelato di vanilla* remembered from 95 at Parks, Nava explained this is made fresh each the morning with vanilla pods, and served on a bed of meringue shards, it provided the perfect cold counterbalance to the hot fondants. I was hot and cold at the same time, in the best possible way!





Runny rummy #whitechocolate and #darkchocolate #fondant with warm #liquid centre,  
@giorgio\_\_nava of @95keerom style. #famousdessert #eatItalian💎💎💎💎💎💎💎💎 Review on  
@bizcommunity soon!

A post shared by Leigh Andrews (@ramblinglitchi123) on Feb 9, 2018 at 6:19am PST

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I'm well aware that cappuccino is a morning drink back in Italy, but it's just what I needed to end off the meal with the ultimate air of satisfaction. Of course I also sampled a spoonful of the day's seasonal sorbet. It was mango, served as three quinelles of soft, fruity zing that just melted on the tongue.

Light and simple and delicious – you can't go wrong at 95 Keerom and may well eat more than you had intended. There's also an exceptional wine list including a careful curation of South Africa and Italy's finest, along with genuine French champagne, like Krug, and a number of MCCs for those celebrations.

Follow my lead and wear pants with an elasticated waistband if you visit 95 Keerom. You'll thank me for it.

*Grazie ancora!* I'll definitely be back.

*\*Leigh Andrews was a guest of 95 Keerom. The restaurant is situated at 95 Keerom Street, and is open for dinner from Monday to Saturday from 6:30pm to 10pm, and for Friday lunch. Note that for dinner, it's a minimum of two courses per person. Parking on Keerom Street itself is limited so rather use the parking lot behind the building, on Queen Victoria Street. For bookings, call 021 422 0765 or email [info@95keerom.com](mailto:info@95keerom.com). Follow 95 Keerom on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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