

# Bon Appetit

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Print & Online Journalism

## Prego's Trattoria

### Serving friends, not customers

After working in the restaurant business in New York for 21 years, Vincento Hernandez had finally had enough.

Hernandez, who now owns The Original Prego's Trattoria on S. Church St., was tired of working for others. He had worked as a waiter for several years and as a manager for 10, but Hernandez said he always knew he wanted to own his own business and work for himself.

"I really enjoy not having a boss on top of me," he said. "I do something when I want to do it and I don't have to tell nobody."

In his quest for independence, Hernan-

dez moved to North Carolina and opened Prego's Dec. 22, 2005. He enlisted the

help of his 24-year-old son, Albert.

"He works here and does pretty much everything," Hernandez said. "He waits tables and helps me cook sometimes. He helps me a lot. He's my king."

The combined efforts of the father-son duo soon turned Prego's into a success – the restaurant's corvina piccata dish was even voted the No. 1 "must eat" dish in Alamance County by "Our State" magazine in July 2010.

Hernandez said he values the number of locals who regularly eat at the restaurant. For him, service to his customers is personal.

"I don't treat customers as customers – I treat them as friends," Hernandez said. "I want people to know me. I want people to feel comfortable and have a dining ex-

perience that's not just 'going out to eat.'"

### Grandma's homemade recipes

Although Hernandez was born in Ecuador to Ecuadorian parents, his grandmother was an Italian immigrant, so the entrees on the menu at Prego's are all dishes he grew up eating at home with his family, he said.

"These are Grandma's recipes," he said. "I try to make it as homemade as possible."

The **Gnocchi alla Sorentina** (\$12.95) is about as homemade as it gets, made from fresh potatoes and pasta topped with fresh pomodoro sauce and melted mozzarella cheese. The **Ravioli con Salsa di Noce** (\$12.95) is also an excellent choice, comprised of homemade spinach and cheese-stuffed ravioli in a walnut cream sauce.

In addition to these homemade favorites, Hernandez takes pride in his weekly specials, which are chosen to reflect a variety of cuisine from all over Italy.

"I've worked for different people from different parts of Italy," he said.

"When I pick my specials, I choose dishes

I've been collecting through the years; I don't have just one dish."



#### Located:

2740 S. Church St.

Price: \$\$

Type: Italian

Distance: 10 minutes from campus

Best place to go for: A romantic date or if your family is visiting

Tip: Don't pass up the complimentary polenta cubes served at the beginning of your meal, even if you don't know what polenta is.

The Edge staff recommends:

Gnocchi alla Sorentina and Ravioli con Salsa di Noce.