

## RESTAURANT UPDATE

### Cavour Restaurant/Hotel Granduca

1080 Uptown Park Blvd. Houston 77056 713.418.1000

Hotel Granduca is a discrete and very European hotel owned and operated by the Giorgio Borlenghi / Interfin Group, which is based in Milan, but which has significant real estate holdings in Houston. The hotel creates an ambiance of Old World charm: discrete, quiet, classy...in other words, a perfect place for a quiet business or personal conversation, cocktail, glass of wine, or elegant dinner. The lobby of the hotel is presided over by liveried doormen and well-groomed and attractive receptionists, as well as at least two well-armed suits of mail (no doubt reproductions, since the size of humans during the time in history battle suits of this nature were worn soldiers were on the average much smaller.) Cavour, the intimate restaurant, is operated by Mistral, the acclaimed French restaurant located on Eldridge Parkway. Lunch antipasti ("before pasta") items include Cavour minestrone; Cream of tomato soup & basil pesto; and Lobster, cucumber, cilantro, ceviche-style roulade with a lemon mousseline. On the salad list are Nicoise salad, yellow, red, and green bell peppers, poached potatoes, French green beans, tomatoes, hard boiled eggs, Nicoise black olives and tuna, with red wine vinaigrette; and Eggplant Parmigiana & sage grilled chicken with baby leaf spinach salad. Main dishes include Pan seared homemade potato gnocchi with tomato coulis and light basil pesto; Soft creamy polenta broiled with aged Parmesan; Veal scaloppini ala Milanese served with baby arugula salad; Pan seared Chilean sea bass on a bed of celery root puree in rosemary mushroom broth; and Lobster risotto on a creamy Vermouth spinach sauce. Among sandwich selections are Open faced butter brioche roast turkey sandwich with avocado, fresh pine apple, and mint; and Kobe beef hamburger crusted with Parmesan cheese, Portabello mushrooms, and red onion remoulade. The dinner menu includes many of these same items, plus Slowly braised center cut veal osso buco Granduca style & risotto alla Milanese; Australian lamb chops crusted with pistachio, au jus, served over a zucchini fricassée; and Shrimp fricassée, fresh herb tomato fusion on olive oil emerging mashed potatoes. In spite of the elegance of the surroundings and the service, the menu pricing is reasonable

### Oporto Food and Wine Bar

3833 Richmond Ave. Houston, 77027 713.621.1114

Tucked discretely away in a strip center near Greenway Plaza and opposite Costco, this little jewel of a restaurant features mouth watering tapas and small pizzettes at affordable prices, as well as a luxury not often found at "wine bars": cocktails. Oporto's Cuban mojito is a perfect thirst buster during Houston's scorching summer. Oporto's wine list – as the name suggests – focuses on Portugal and Galicia (northwest Spain). Spanish whites and reds, ports, and Portuguese offerings are too numerous to mention, but tend to compliment the wide choice of individual plates of tapas. The food and wines of Portugal and Spain, countries which endure hot summers like those of Houston, go surprisingly well here too. Among the wide assortment of tapas: Camaroes piri-piri, sauteed large shrimp in garlic, lemon, Madeira wine olive oil, and piri-piri oil; Spinach and artichoke crostini, topped with spinach and artichoke gratin and truffle oil; Prosciutto wrapped dates, ricotta, goat cheese, fresh herbs stuffing, baked and drizzled with Port-balsamic glaze; Tortilla primavera, Spanish potato and spring veggies, baked egg omelet served with piri piri sauce; Duo of hummus, sun dried tomato hummus paired with roasted garlic rosemary hummus served with pita bread and veggies; Arugula and crab salad, jumbo lump crabmeat salad with roasted peppers, dried cranberries, goat cheese & pine nuts; Salmon ahumado, pepper smoked salmon with arugula greens, pears, and tomato Dijon vinaigrette; and Albondigas Merruecos, Moroccan style lamb meatballs braised in a charmoula tomato sauce, served with fresh warm pita. A wide range of cheese and smoked meat plates is available. Soups and salads include Caldo verde, Portuguese potato, kale, and chorizo soup; and Salada Atlantico, chopped salad, avocado, hearts of palm, cherry tomato, picked red onion, artichoke, with lemon honey vinaigrette. Small pizza (pizzettes) and Panini are available with a wide variety of "fixings."

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*Note: By way of qualifications for reviewing restaurants, Hankamer has owned and operated numerous restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, discotheques and banquet halls over the last forty years; he has travelled to over 70 countries and has studied and lived in Europe for over three years; he was co-owner of a home delivery wine of the month club and imported his own wine labels for years. The opinions expressed in Hankamer Commercial RESTAURANT UPDATE are the opinions of Hankamer only and these opinions may not be shared by RED News or any other advertising medium in which UPDATE appears. Copyright 2007 Ray Hankamer, Hankamer Commercial/Hankamer & Associates.*