

North End vs. Federal Hill: a classic face-off



DELI MEALS TO GO

DAVID LYON FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

NORTH END: It's easy to become paralyzed by the choices at DePasquale's Homemade Pasta Shop (66A Cross St., 617-248-9629, www.homemade-pasta.com), where pasta maker Zoya Kogan creates 50 shapes and fillings. Some of that great pasta goes to Bricco Ristorante, but the cases are still full of such treats as smoked chicken and marscapone ravioli or squid ink and tomato pappardelle. Great artisanal cheeses are available to sprinkle on top.

ADVANTAGE: Oh, just kill us now. We'll eat twice.

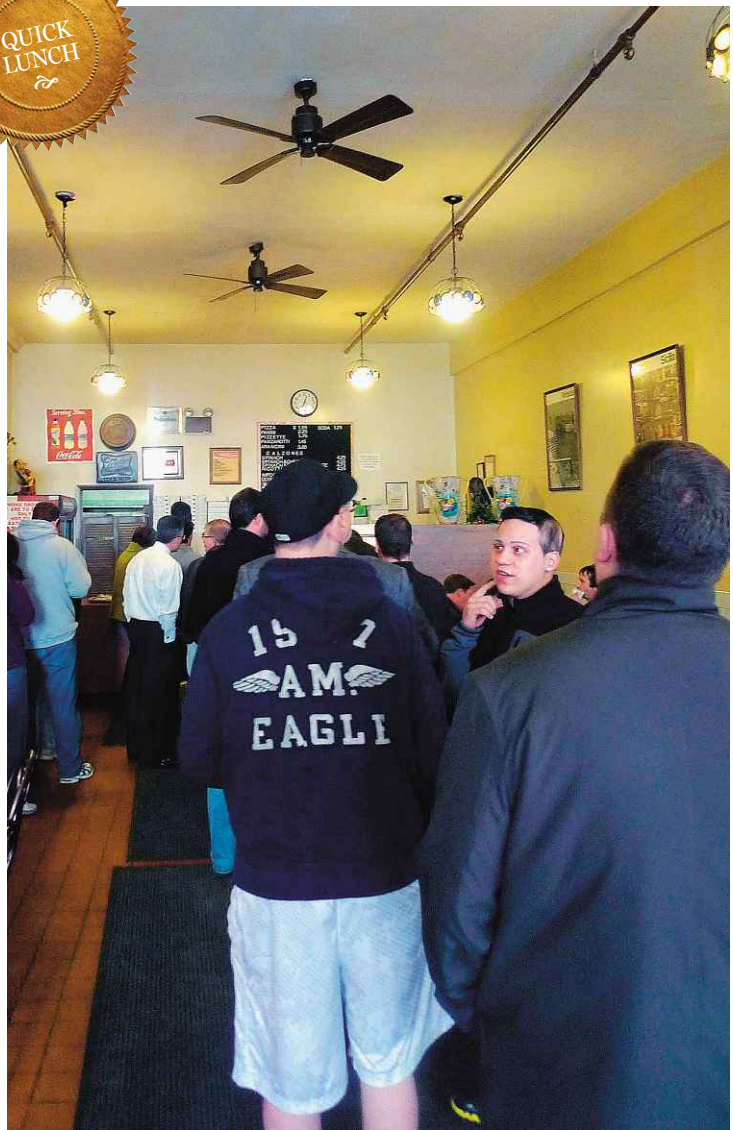
FEDERAL HILL: Some Providence restaurants get their pastas from Costantino's Venda Ravioli (265 Atwells Ave., 401-421-9105, www.vendaravioli.com), and you can, too. But Venda Ravioli also has cases full of gorgeous prepared foods, like braciola cooked in marinara, stuffed rolled eggplant, and even artichokes filled with crabmeat. Heat the eggplant or chicken parm in your own oven. Your dinner guests need never know.

NORTH END: Galleria Umberto (289 Hanover St., 617-227-5709), the busiest lunch place in the neighborhood, closes by 2:30 p.m. But in a few short hours it serves up countless orders of arancini (fried rice balls stuffed with meat ragu and mushy peas); calzones filled with various combinations of spinach, sausage, and cheeses; pizza slices; and the smaller variant of calzones known as panzarotti. Cash only.

FEDERAL HILL: Roma (310 Atwells Ave., 401-331-5000, www.romaprov.com) is a market that moonlights as an evening trattoria. Pizza and calzones are a big part of the lunch menu, but Roma is known for its "Famous Original Italian Grinder." This Dagwood-worthy sandwich features capocollo, salami, ham, mortadella, provolone, lettuce, tomatoes, hot peppers, red onion, and sliced olives.

ADVANTAGE: Boston. Everyone from construction workers to well-dressed older women on a nostalgia trip line up at Galleria Umberto.

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NORTH END: You can buy good Italian wines in any mainstream liquor store, but it's harder to find digestives and grappas to conclude an Italian meal. In addition to a huge selection of mostly northern Italian wines, V. Cirace & Son (173 North St., 617-227-3193, www.vcirace.com) has one of the largest selections of grappas and aquavita in the country. The family business, founded in 1906, developed the Herbe di Amalfi brand of herb- and flower-infused liqueurs, and even has its own brand of limoncello.

FEDERAL HILL: Antonio Gasbarro got an eight-year jump on the Cirace family, establishing Gasbarro's Liquors in 1898. Now known as Gasbarro's Wines (361 Atwells Ave., 401-421-4170, www.gasbarros.com), the shop occupies a commodious space worthy of a furniture showroom. Along with around 900 Italian wines (and even more California bottles), Gasbarro's has a select line of high-end liqueurs, grappas, and digestives, including the full selection of Poli single-varietal grappas from the Veneto.

ADVANTAGE: Boston. V. Cirace does its own importing, giving the shop access to more tiny boutique producers.

NORTH END: A quarter buys you 12 minutes, assuming you can find an open meter. Most street parking is reserved for residents, and the lots and garages can get pricey.

FEDERAL HILL: On-street parking, even on the main drag of Atwells Avenue, is free for two hours at a stretch. Then you have to move the car to another spot.

ADVANTAGE: Providence. Save those quarters for espresso.

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