

First Look: Spiegelworld's Superfrico Reveals a New Psychedelic Dinner Experience

The Cosmopolitan's new restaurant is just weird enough to work.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPIEGELWORLD

Bright, colorful, and weird by design, Superfrico is what happens when an entertainment company takes charge of a restaurant in Las Vegas. Landing on the second floor of the Cosmopolitan resort, the new venue by Spiegelworld, which also operates the Opium stage show next door, takes over a space once home to Rose.Rabbit.Lie., replacing the former superclub with an '80s acid trip of eclectic original artwork, neon decor, and moody lighting.

A candy-colored mural specifically commissioned for Superfrico frames the kitchen doors, with the service team almost getting lost within the acrylic painting as they come and go. Other bizarre sights include hands reaching out from the walls while holding up the stem of a flower, some disturbing family portraits, and even a collection of action figures based on the Opium cast. If it's all too much, just focus on the vinyl spinning at a DJ booth in the nearby lounge area called the Studio. From the moment you enter Superfrico (in a circular blue-lit waiting room that feels like the beginning of a theme park ride) to the purple hallway that leads to the host stand, you know you're in for a beautifully odd experience.

As we navigate the complications and uncertainty of a new Roaring 20s, Superfrico is a welcome change of pace and uniquely fits the times. It's a place where things are meant to feel "off"—and if we're going to face the new normal together, let's do it with great food and lots of fun (and a mask when not sitting at your table).



PHOTO BY ROB KACHELRIESS

While Superfrico and Opium operate together with a certain synergy, a ticket to the latter isn't essential to have a complete experience at Superfrico. Some of the performers may even make an appearance in the dining room to give you a taste of what the sci-fi variety show is all about. Don't be surprised to see jugglers tossing illuminated balls atop furniture or an astronaut with a giant eye in place of a head. If someone approaches your table with a briefcase with an offer to "Upgrade your fork," say yes.

"It's a very ambitious idea—the theater spilling into the dining room and the dining room spilling into the theater," says chef Anthony Falco. "I mean, you can do anything you want in Vegas."

So what about the food? The menu promises an evening of "psychedelic Italian" dining, much of it shaped by Falco's Sicilian heritage and childhood weekends spent wolfing down his grandmother's cooking on a family farm. He also took inspiration from travels around the world. The yuzu kosho (fermented peppers and yuzu) he grew to appreciate in Japan is now used in Superfrico's calamari with a sweet touch of tangerine honey. Falco also expanded his spice expertise by collaborating with Lebanese chefs in the Middle East. The influence is felt in the dry-aged beef meatball appetizer, which disregards tomato sauce for a savory agrodolce of saffron, raisin, mint, pistachio, and honey.

"Fusion implies that ingredients were separate and brought together," says Falco. "When I travel around the world, I'm looking for threads that exist already."



PHOTO BY ANTHONY MAIR

With that in mind, Falco notes that Sicily was once an emirate and has a legacy of entangled cultures. His Lamb Ragu Babbaluci marks the intersection of Italian and North African flavors with lamb sausage, mint, lemon labneh (yogurt), and za'atar spices over pipe rigate. The combination was originally planned for a pizza, but the chef decided it worked better in a pasta dish. The carbonara, by comparison, follows a more traditional recipe with the bite of fresh cracked pepper playing off the richness of a creamy white sauce. However, the chef still found a way to mix things up with a longer noodle-like version of fusilli with guanciale (fatty pork cheek) instead of pancetta.

Pizzas are naturally leavened with partially stone-milled flour and come in a choice of two styles. "Square" is Sicilian-style, with a thick, crispy-edged crust that's best experienced with the hearty combination of 'nduja (spicy sausage) and pepperoni. "Round" describes a thin, New York-style crust with a charred and chewy texture that lends well to both a traditional Margherita or the adventurous Mushroom Mogul. The latter generously layers thick, flavorful mushrooms on a light lemon, cream, and white wine sauce.

Overall, portions are on the smaller side but meant to be shareable, allowing tables to sample multiple items while working their way up to heartier fare like the catch of the day (fileted with lemon and capers) or chicken parmesan (Mary's Organic Chicken, breaded in sourdough, and served with a spicy marinara). The food is often brought to the table on light blue dishware—a simple presentation that complements the eccentricity of the restaurant but also allows the ingredients to command attention without getting lost in the chaos of the dining room.

The cocktail list, curated by Leo Robitschek, offers offbeat variations on familiar recipes. The Emma-ReNAe is similar to a Penicillin, but with a touch of coconut and sherry to even out the bourbon, honey, and ginger. The Boozy Skuntion is a modified Old Fashioned with banana-raisin infused rum. It's sweet, but with a bold, upfront intensity. There's a Negroni menu with four recipes—none of them traditional, including the Pizza Party combo of gin, campari, and vermouth with tomato water and basil. It's kind of like a garden in a glass.



PHOTO BY ANTHONY MAIR

Enjoying drinks in a variety of spaces is part of Superfrico's charm. Beyond the dining room and lounge areas, there's the secluded "Ski Lodge"—a speakeasy with log cabin decor, après-ski attitude, and its own exclusive cocktail list that favors the classics. Bottle-O is a retail shop near the front entrance where bottled cocktails are sold to-go (in brown paper bags so you can show everyone how naughty you are while roaming the Cosmopolitan's casino floor). Even the audience at Opium can scan a QR code and order cocktails and bites from Superfrico without leaving their seats. "No matter how bad the show is, you're never going to run out of booze," jokes Ross Mollison of Spiegelworld.

Superfrico is in soft-opening mode (or "in previews" as the theater crowd might say) until an official grand opening on October 28. Reservations are available Wednesday through Sunday from 5 pm to "late" (around 2 am) via SevenRooms. Opium performs the same evenings at 8 pm and 10 pm with tickets available on the show's website.