

EMAIL ZIP [JOIN FREE](#)

I've devoured and accept the [Terms & Conditions](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) and confirm I am at least 21 years old.

Wise Guys | Rao's

Hollywood gets a taste of East Harlem Italian

10/16/13 | Los Angeles Dining | Garrett Snyder



Meatballs | Rao's | Seafood Salad (Photos by Rao's Restaurant Group)



Walking into the new Rao's in Hollywood--the latest branch of Harlem's legendary old-school Italian haunt--feels like stumbling onto a movie set.

Dark wood walls are plastered with signed headshots of Rat Pack-era celebrities and Christmas decorations that stay up year-round. Your gesticulating waiter recommends the spaghetti Bolognese and a glass of Chianti in a rough Bronx accent. What coast are we on again?

The restaurant's original location in New York--outfitted with just ten tables--is known for its impossible-to-procure reservations. In *Goodfellas* terms, you have to know someone who knows someone.

In Hollywood, reservations are decidedly less difficult. Once you've settled into your plush leather booth, it's best to start with a plate of baseball-sized meatballs swimming in marinara (\$16), which yield to the lightest pull of a fork.

The rest of the menu is equally iconic: We savored a superb veal Parmesan (\$49) paved with an inch-thick layer of melted mozzarella and chilled seafood salad (\$26) made with tender rings of squid and fresh shellfish tossed in lemon vinaigrette.

The simple Italian-American cooking--produced by executive chef Nicole Grimes--is hearty and charming, but for these prices, it's more about the atmosphere.

Rao's nostalgic warmth might be a borrowed act, but it makes for a darn good show.

[RESERVE](#) **Make a Reservation at Rao's**

[EVEN MORE](#) **Read About the History of Rao's**

[MAKE IT!](#) **Chad Colby's Spaghetti with Clams**

2X THE TIPS

★ NOTABLE

If you aren't able to score a reservation, the eight-seat bar is usually open to walk-ins. It's the perfect space to enjoy a glass of Montepulciano or house-made cannoli while people watching.



Earn 2x ThankYou® Points on whatever you're craving.

thankyou PREFERRED citi

0000 0012 3456 7890

Earn 2 points for every dollar you spend at restaurants. [Learn More](#)

RECENT STORIES

Tue. 05 Nov '13 / Dining

To Live and Dine in L.A.
An exclusive cocktail party and cookbook...

Tue. 05 Nov '13 / Dining

Cheap Thrills | Taco Love
An epic ode to the California Burrito in...

Mon. 04 Nov '13 / Dining

Holy Rollers | The Church Key
Dim sum dining gets a modern spin on the...

Mon. 28 Oct '13 / Dining

Call of the Wild | Red Medicine
Jordan Kahn embraces the foraging spirit at...



TT BEHIND THE SCENES

FOLLOW US ON 