

HITLER'S TRANCE Arlington's Role in the Nazi Regime
DAVID BALDACCI Native Author Writes His Own Rules
TRIPLE HOMICIDE Three Years Later, Still No Suspects
CHILDREN'S SAFETY Is NoVA Prepared for a Disaster?

Northern Virginia

THE [50 BEST RESTAURANTS] 2010



Chief Tavern Chef's special beef tenderloin, see their number page 98

PLUS

DECODING THE TEXTING LINGO p. 17
 WINES THAT'LL SET TONGUES



MODERN AMERICAN

RUSTICO [\$\$]

FOOD: **8.3** AMBIENCE: **7.7** SERVICE: **7.5**

HIGHS: Sample-slinging bar keeps **LOW:** Shoulder-to-shoulder happy hours **SHARE:** Meatball-laden pizza **SNIDE:** Asian-style pork ribs

For a moment there I felt like Reese Witherspoon, watching a group of freshly minted 'rents winding their way through Rustico's bar with a tender tyke in tow. Spare the sitter, spoil the child.

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Between the smoking ban and overt camaraderie enjoyed by all at the beer haven, there really is no reason the whole family shouldn't avail themselves of chef Steve Mannino's innovative cuisine.

Cottony brioche struggles to contain a seafood feast of soft shell crab bolstered by sweet-and-sour cucumber relish and tangy avocado (Old Bay-sprinkled fries complete the experience).

Classic stroganoff gets reinterpreted via sautéed potato croquettes, sage sausage and button mushrooms submerged in a magnetic sour cream sauce, a cooked-to-order NY strip crowning the savory mix.

Roast chicken chews up the scenery in a double bill of dark meat-studded ragout (deepened by mushrooms and spinach) and cooked-till-crackling breast.