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Luciano Del Signore of Bacco Ristorante says his new price structure and smaller portions allow guests to have three courses for what they used to pay for an entree.

Or they may scale down to a shared appetizer and a relatively inexpensive pasta dish. He also notes that each entree includes all the elements of a meal, "a protein, two vegetables and a starch on each plate."

At Assaggi Mediterranean Bistro, the \$13 meze platter of taboulee, roasted beets, olives, feta, stuffed grape leaves, hummus and yogurt sauce easily serves two, and some entrees may be had in two portion sizes. Instead of paying \$26 for a full portion of Moroccan duck or \$24 for almond-crusting rainbow trout, those who want a smaller portion can order them for \$14 apiece.

Another restaurant adding half-portions to the menu is Salvatore Scallopini, says proprietor Larry Bongiovanni, who will offer, for instance, chicken Tosca in \$14.95 and \$8.95 servings, including a side of pasta, at his restaurants in Madison Heights, Grosse Pointe Woods and Flint.

Tasting menus that include three courses at a modest set price are also turning up as a hedge against the recession. At the rooftop Iridescence, where the price structure across the board has been reduced significantly, the best bet for those with an eye on that right-hand column is an elegant three-course

array at \$35. Wolfgang Puck Grille offers an appealing three courses at \$29.

What it all boils down to is this: it's a good time to be a discerning diner, because the best part of the new attitude in restaurants is that quality is being emphasized along with price-awareness.

Josie Knapp of Assaggi sums it up well when she says, "The most important thing is quality and service, anything we can do above and beyond expectations. The one thing we don't do is gimmicks."

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**Roast**, Westin Book Cadillac, 1128 Washington Blvd., Detroit, (313) 961-2500

**Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar**, 17400 Haggerty Road, Livonia, (734) 542-9463; 323 N. Old Woodward Ave., Birmingham (248) 723-0134

**Bacco Ristorante**, 29410 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, (248) 356-6600

**Assaggi Mediterranean Bistro**, 330 W. Nine Mile, Ferndale, (248) 584-3499

**Iridescence**, MotorCity Casino Hotel, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit, (313) 237-6732

**Wolfgang Puck Grille**, MGM Detroit Grand, 1777 Third St., Detroit, (313) 465-1648

**Salvatore Scallopini**, 1650 E. 12 Mile, Madison Heights, (248) 542-3281; 19655 Mack Ave., Grosse Pointe Woods, (313) 886-3350; G-3226 Miller Road, Flint, (810) 732-1070

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