



## Bill Boggs' Corner Table: Patsy's Italian Restaurant

The TV presenter and journalist heads to the renowned New York restaurant



Boggs with chef Sal Scognamillo

**Patsy's** has been going strong for almost seventy years, and during all those decades they have only had three chefs—the original Patsy, his son Joe, and currently Joe's son Sal Scognamillo. The place is a haunt of many celebrities. I dined there once and George Clooney was sitting behind me with his dad. Another night Tony Bennett and John Travolta were at tables in the back.

The food is straight-ahead southern Italian cooking that to many represents America's comfort food. It's a red sauce world at Patsy's, and their sauces are available in the better supermarkets. The place is like your trusty neighborhood checkered tablecloth Italian restaurant that got dressed up and went to New York and made it big.

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Classics with a Neapolitan heritage abound—stuffed calamari, linguine marechiaro (clams out of the shell with garlic, herbs and a touch of tomato), shrimp scampi, spiedini alla Romana (layers of bread and mozzarella, fried and served with an anchovy butter sauce), rigatoni Sorrentino (baked with tomato sauce, mozzarella, ricotta and Parmigiano-Reggiano), and sausage pizzaiola with peppers. Sinatra's favorite back in the day was a thinly pounded veal piccata.

Of particular note on the menu is the crowd-pleasing lobster fra diavolo, which is split, pan seared, and simmered in a spicy marinara sauce and served with linguine.

What has always stood out for me at Patsy's is the [family](#) tradition. Joe and his cousin Frank work the door and seat you. Joe's lovely wife Rose is at the register; Sal is back in the kitchen. You call Patsy's for a reservation the second time and they will know you. The third time you are in, you'll get a hug. The Scognamillo family prides itself in saying about their cozy spot on west 58th street, "There are the restaurants you go to and the restaurants you go back to."