

**BUSINESS, NEWS**

## **LYNN'S NEW CIAO CAFE AND BISTRO IS "A FAMILY THING"**

BY GUTHRIE SCRIMGEOUR | April 13, 2021



*Owner Joseph Torretta shows off the high-heat brick oven that will create the traditional Naples-style pizza that Ciao Cafe and Bistro will serve. (Julia Hopkins)*

LYNN — Ciao Cafe and Bistro is bringing authentic Italian cuisine to downtown Lynn.

The restaurant, which opened Tuesday, is a family venture from Joseph and Sarah Torretta, their daughters Olivia and Sonia, son-in-law Jonathan Santini, and Sonia's fiancé Sean McDonough.

“It’s a family thing,” said Olivia, who also noted that each family member contributed something to the development of the bistro. “We all worked together.”

Restauranting has long been in the family’s blood, with both of the kids going to work in the family restaurants from a young age.

“It’s good, it’s bad, it’s ugly. It’s all the above,” said Sonia, who began working at the original D’Amici’s bakery when she was eight years old. “My mom taught us that if there’s an issue at work, you can’t bring it home with you. We all love it.”

“I grew up working every holiday,” she said. “The best memories were running around like crazy the day of a holiday and getting home and being able to relax afterwards.”

The family were the original owners of D’Amici’s bakery, which stood at the same location at 41 Sutton St., and closed in 2018.

On one wall of the new restaurant hangs the front bumper of a 1970s Fiat, a gift from Jonathan’s family in Italy. The car also features prominently in the restaurant’s logo.

Behind the counter sits a brick pizza oven that can reach up to 900 degrees, and which makes what the family calls “the best pizza on the North Shore.”

“Our pizza sauce is San Marzano tomatoes, which grow at the base of Mount Vesuvius in Italy. They’re world renowned,” said Joseph.

He described the pizza as having a little bit of a “flop” to it, in the Italian style, with fresh mozzarella. The dough is made of “Double Zero” flour, a particularly fine variety which is imported from Naples.

“It’s the real Italian dough,” said Jonathan, who hails from Italy.

Joseph Torretta recommends that customers try “The Ciao,” a white pizza topped with truffle cream, bacon crumbles and caramelized onions.

They also offer a variety of salads, fried foods, and entrées, along with a full bar. However, the restaurant’s opening was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This started a long time ago,” said Olivia Santini. “We almost had it ready before COVID. We decided it was kind of pointless to open during a lockdown. So we waited, and here we are.”

Finally, state restaurant capacities have increased to the point where they decided it was time for an opening.

“We feel confident, even with the limited seating, that we’ll be OK,” said Joseph.

They plan to be open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and Sunday from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

“Lynn has always been good to us,” said Joseph. “I think it’s going to be a big hit.”



### Guthrie Scrimgeour

Guthrie joined the Daily Item in 2020 after graduating Carnegie Mellon University with a degree in International Relations and Politics. He was born and raised on the North Shore and is a proud graduate of Salem Public Schools.

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