



YOU ARE HERE: [HOME](#) / [AREA NEWS](#) / [THE NORTHERN WESTCHESTER EXAMINER](#) / [DOLCE VITA CAFE BRINGS SWEET DELICACIES TO YORKTOWN](#)

Dolce Vita Cafe Brings Sweet Delicacies to Yorktown

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By Abby Luby

Dolce Vita in Italian means “Sweet Life.” And in the hamlet of Yorktown Heights, sweet comes by way of a new café, appropriately named Dolce Vita Café. Think traditional Italian cakes such as Tiramisu, Ricotta and Pistachio Cake, Cannoli, Tartufo Cake Cappuccino complemented with Cappuccino, Caffè Lattes, or Chia Latte Tea.



The café's grand opening was Saturday, May 18 at 1877 Commerce Street at Underhill Plaza. Owners are wife and husband Anduela and Marsel Praela who purchased the storefront in December 2018. They spent about four months renovating it to accommodate about 50 people. The space is bright and airy, especially when the floor to ceiling front window opens out to the sidewalk lending to a street café feel. Soft lighting, marble top tables and deep green velvet couches give the café a relaxed atmosphere.

The café's soft opening was on May 7 and since then there's been a steady flow of customers. "We've been busy every afternoon and evening since our soft opening," said Mrs. Praela. "Now we know when the busiest times are and what people like to eat. People have asked for certain breakfast dishes and we want to adapt to our customers' requests."

When no one was showing up at 6 a.m., the Praelas changed their hours and opened at 8 a.m. They close at 10 p.m.

Marsel Praela owns a construction business and Anduela Praela teaches middle school in the Bronx. This is the couple's first venture into the restaurant business and running the family owned café is Marsel's sister, Arta Praela. All pastries are made by Bindi, an internationally known Italian dessert company whose Arthur Avenue distributor delivers to Dolce Vita Café once or twice a week. About 20 cakes on the menu include carrot cake, red velvet and cannoli, to name just a few. Also on the menu is the Albanian pastry Byrek, which is a rolled filo pastry filled with spinach and cheese. Summer drinks include cold flavored frappuccinos, smoothies and iced coffee. There are several flavors of Gelato.

Although the Praela family is Albanian, they have lived in Westchester for more than a decade and are currently Yorktown residents. Anduela and Marsel Praela have a daughter in third grade at Brookside Elementary School in Yorktown and a baby boy just born on March 6.

The idea of having a special eatery to imbibe a good cup of cappuccino along with a delicious dessert came after the closing of TWIST Frozen Yogurt & Sweet Shop in Yorktown's Roma building. "We realized there was no place to go for a sweet dessert, especially a place that was kid friendly. Dolce Vita Café is a place where you can meet a friend in the afternoon or have a nice dessert after going out for dinner," Mrs. Praela said.

She said future plans may include some type of live entertainment to add a certain ambience. "But for now, the café has much appeal."