



Norwalk Chef Fulfills Culinary Vision With Refreshed Restaurant

by Jay Polansky 11/19/2015 BUSINESS



Chef Renato Donzelli relaxes in his Norwalk restaurant Wednesday morning. Photo Credit: *Jay Polansky*



NORWALK, Conn. — Renato Donzelli likes to create in his kitchen.

“I like to play with new ingredients,” Donzelli said from a table in his Norwalk eatery Wednesday. “I like to reinvent.”

Donzelli’s creativity doesn’t stop with the culinary arts. Recently he re-created the dining room in his Latin Mediterranean restaurant, Basso Café Restaurant and Bar.

The renovations also coincide with another change: Diners, who used to bring their own liquor, can now order drinks off the menu.

But the draw at Basso Café Restaurant and Bar is the food. He likes to offer food that tastes good but is also healthy, he said.

Donzelli has been cooking since he was 17 years old. Originally from Venezuela, he grew up in an Italian family, enjoying his mother and grandmother's cooking.

He became a certified computer technician in 1991, but he soon realized that his true passion was cooking.

In 1997, he moved to the United States. He held sous chef and chef positions in several well-known restaurants in New York and Connecticut before starting his own restaurant.

He named his restaurant after his father's birthplace, Campobasso. The town, which is located in the south central portion of Italy, is the capital of the region of Molise and the capital of the province of Campobasso.

His food reflects the different places he has lived and worked. Items on the menu range from Italian specialties such as tiramisu and gnocchi to arepas, a Latin speciality.

And it will all be served in the fresh, upbeat, renovated space.

Donzelli said the changes complete a longstanding vision he has had for the eatery.

"I feel happy that I have my restaurant complete in the way I visualized it when we first opened," Donzelli said.

Basso Café Restaurant and Bar is located at 124 New Canaan Ave. in Norwalk near the New Canaan line. The eatery is holding a launch party Thursday night, which is sponsored by Broken Shed Vodka.

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