

OSSINING'S GREEN FOOD SCENE



Photo: Tom Deacon

THE NEW MAIN STREET



Something special is happening in the Village of Ossining. Just a few years ago, many just drove down Main Street in the morning to get to the train station. With so many stores closed, and empty sidewalks, Ossining's downtown had the look and feel of a town in decline, a place with a storied past but no future.

The liveliest sign of life in the village has been Saturday's Down to Earth farmer's market, where folks have been gathering to shop and chat for the last twenty-five years. Uptown, the Wobble Café became a neighborhood gathering place as soon as it opened in 2004.

In just the last few years, three restaurants, a pub, and a coffeehouse—an unofficial community space—opened their doors on Main Street. Beyond Main Street, an organic farm and two more restaurants were established. New families moving in began to see Main Street as the heart of the village. Folks around the town began to notice. During the day, families with kids and strollers and workers from around the area were seen on Main Street's sidewalks, frequenting

these new restaurants. Couples looking for a night out came to Main Street. Luis Corena, owner of First Village Coffee, says "People are meeting here after work, meeting friends. It's exactly what I wanted for a downtown space." These new businesses are part of an ongoing revitalization of the village and town. "Ossining has been so tremendous in welcoming me. And I feel strongly about being part of the new face of Ossining," says Laurie Gershgorin, owner of organic Good Choice Kitchen.

The new chefs and owners share a passion for turning food dreams into successful and thriving businesses. Most have grown up in the food world, cooking with their grandmothers and working in families' restaurants. They know how to engage their customers, and they all have built loyal followings in this short time. These are family places in the best sense, welcoming and comfortable. The chefs and owners practice "clean eating," and the very best part—the food is delicious.



Beyond that, they all share an unusual understanding about what a “green” business is and how to implement workable sustainable strategies. They care about their impact on the environment. They buy locally. Fable Farm owner Tom Deacon supplies organic hydroponic produce and heritage chicken eggs to several restaurants. “Hudson Valley farms have become much better about getting food out to market,” says Basta chef Roger Mason. Many have rejected Styrofoam altogether and use compostable products. They routinely reduce the use of paper and plastic. Six Degrees of Separation pub owner Scott Ryan uses biodegradable takeout bags. They buy LED lights and “green” cleaning products. Los Abuelos owner Olga Bonilla makes her own, with vinegar.

Recently, there have been discussions among owners about composting and zero waste!

By getting to know each of these passionate chefs and owners, we were not only privileged to learn their stories, but felt the new village spirit they are creating. Green Ossining celebrates these businesses. The community spirit they have engendered on Main Street and throughout the village and town is inspiring. We are delighted to tell you their stories.

Suzie Ross, Chair, Green Ossining
Polly Franchini, writer/designer
Green Ossining Committee



Photo: Tom Deacon

DOWN TO EARTH FARMERS MARKETS



Established 1992

Owner: Miriam Haas

173 Main Street / 914-923-4837

downtoearthmarkets.com

Miriam tells her story:

"We moved to Ossining more than 25 years ago, when my daughter was young. In the late 1980s news reports about the health risks to children from eating apples sprayed with the chemical Alar made me wonder about the alternatives so I started looking for local, organic fruit. I had no luck at the supermarket, where the sole focus at the time was on giving shoppers easy access to plentiful fruits and vegetables, no matter how long out of season or how far they had to be shipped. I started making some phone calls and rallied a group of fellow parents to form Families for Safe Food with the mission of increasing the local availability of organically produced food and tackling related environmental issues.

Our first idea was to create a food co-op. This

turned out to be a labor-intensive project because in the pre-internet era we had to take phone orders from the fifteen family members one-by-one and then organize the orders for a company that distributed organic produce. The food was dropped off at Bailey Farms in one of their unheated barns for distribution. It was a weekly social event and our kids loved running around together but I remember thinking, "there has got to be a better way." After quite a bit of nudging, I managed to convince the town that we needed an Ossining Farmers Market. There had been a farmers' market in Ossining years before but the downtown merchants saw it as competition and did not support it. Since then the downtown had faded and it was clear that we needed something that would draw people back to the shops and sidewalks of Ossining. In August of 1991 I launched the farmers market with two farmers. The market was met with great enthusiasm on opening day. It was a slow build from there but it gave locals a reason to rediscover downtown and a way to gather casually as a community.



“I hope farmers’ markets remain vibrant in the future as the next generation become shoppers.”



Since that summer day in 1991 we have opened farmers’ markets in other towns and built our expertise. The Ossining Farmers Market has grown to include all kinds of growers and food makers and operates year-round. Over the years we have experienced many trends, from having a hard time finding organic farmers, to seeing organics surge in popularity, to the growth of the CSA (community supported agriculture) movement, the addition of pasture raised meats and artisanal cheeses, farm breweries being allowed to sell beer and spirits at the markets and the proliferation of farmers markets, which we helped spearhead. Our approach has not changed at all since then though. I decided early on that the market should stick to selling local food and we’re careful in selecting vendors who meet our standards and are transparent in their production practices.

Ossining has changed over the years too, as new immigrants came for a better life and have been a

boon to our market in the summer. The *mercado*, a commonplace thing in many countries in Central and South America, is the go-to place for these residents. And recently we have seen a new wave of young families who are used to shopping at farmers’ markets in the city moving to Ossining to raise kids and find more room.

I hope that the farmers’ markets remain vibrant in the future as the next generation become shoppers. If we can clump the millenials into a group, we have been told that they want to connect to brands that have meaning and relevance to their lifestyle, which may be less corporate, and that they choose products and experiences that consider sustainability. They want to be able to trace where things come from. The farmers’ market is one of the first places where this kind of thinking was put into practice. I consider it not only an important legacy but our blueprint as we move our business into the future.”



GOOD CHOICE KITCHEN



Established 2017

Chef and owner: Laurie Gershgorn

147 Main Street / 914-930-1591

goodchoicekitchen.com



"I'm passionate about the power of nutrition in sustaining health, preventing illness, and healing the body."

—LAURIE GERSHGORN

The open kitchen area of Good Choice Kitchen café is the first thing you see walking in, and it is its heart. The energetic chef

behind the counter, exuding contagious joy, is its soul.

Laurie Gershgorn's food journey to her organic restaurant in Ossining is a long and happy one. Some of her earliest memories were as a six-year-old in Brooklyn, cooking Sunday dinners with her large extended family. After college and a career in the TV industry, Laurie decided to stay home with her own growing family. That was when her interest in nutrition and health issues, as well as alternative medicine and illness prevention, began. Eventually this led her to New York City's Natural Gourmet Institute for Health and Culinary Arts, where she enrolled in their chef training program. Now she was able to combine her passion for illness prevention and wellness through nutrition with her professional chef training.

After several years as a personal chef and caterer, she made the decision to establish what she called "a central kitchen location," which became Good Choice Kitchen café. Choosing Ossining for the location was strategic. She knew many people in the area already, and saw that Ossining was in the midst of a healthy growth, with new families moving in and the downtown area beginning to revitalize.

Chef Gershgorn says she "wanted a community interactive location where we could serve people of all socio-economic levels and expose more people to more healthy whole foods that are all organic and sustainable products and sustainably grown. . . . "I feel strongly about being part of the new face of Ossining."

The café is a combination of table dining and take-out. She also has installed a refrigerator filled with what she calls healthy "Grab-N-Go" options. Her website tells us "our menu is organic, bio-farmed, local, non-GMO, fair trade, veg-centric, plant-based, and peanut-free. Options that exclude dairy, soy, gluten, egg, and corn are available." The extensive menu is a seasonal one, and changes quite often. The cafe has become very popular in the short time it's been open, and one happy customer who works nearby tells me, "We consider it our lunch room!"

And she is one of the "greenest" businesses among the new restaurants downtown. Buying locally, eliminating plastic, using glass and compostable packaging, these are just some of the many elements of her green business model.

Chef Gershgorn's mission is clear—"I became a chef to serve people good, clean, well prepared foods—knowing what foods are good for you." She is more than fulfilling that mission with Good Choice Kitchen, an important part of Ossining's green food scene.



Above: Moroccan Inspired Stew. Photos: Meghan Spiro

FIRST VILLAGE COFFEE



Established 2016

Owners: Luis and Kathryn Corena

123 Main Street / 914-236-3765

firstvillagecoffee.com

"I think there's a really good energy here, and people are really excited. I think there's a lot of hometown pride in Ossining, and I think that sometimes doesn't get realized. Being a community hub for people to come and express that, I think that's going to be great."

— KATHRYN CORENA

Kathryn and Luis Corena, who met and married in San Francisco, know about coffeehouses. The classic coffeehouses there and in New York's Village are unique places—with exceptional coffees, casual settings, local art and readings—creating that special

cool. The Corenas have created their own version in Ossining, as a "green" coffeehouse, and have indeed created their own special cool on Main Street. For many, First Village Coffee has come to represent the heart of the village and its new food scene.

The team has lived in Ossining for fifteen years, and know many of their very loyal customer base. Luis, who grew up in El Salvador and had restaurant experience, has a natural affinity for working with people. He can be found behind the counter every day, along with his employees, talking with customers while preparing perfect espresso and chai (customer favorites) and much more.

"Specialty coffee is a very high level of quality, which makes it more expensive, but there's a reason for it," Kathryn says. Their coffee comes from Irving Farm Coffee Roasters in Millerton, Dutchess County.



Kathryn and Luis Corena. Photo: Andreas Engel



Photo above: Ana Cabreira

Irving Farm has a training lab in New York City—the only Specialty Coffee Association of America certified training in the city—and the Corenas attended before opening the coffeehouse.

“You can get great coffee but if it’s not prepared in the right way, it’s not going to taste the right way,” she added.

They get dairy products from Battenkill Valley Creamery in Salem, Washington County, and pastries from various local bakeries as well as their own kitchen.

And their vision for the next few years? Kathryn says, “Continuing to be a central community space and contributing to the growth of our downtown. Using

our space for more events and expanding our food menu.”

They are dedicated to being a green business. Luis has talked about going to zero-waste—a long-term goal. They are limiting single-use plastics and plan to phase them out entirely. Their takeaway products are biodegradable. In the spring, they are planning on giving away coffee grounds for composting and will host workshops on how best to incorporate grounds into compost. They would like to see composting as a village-wide initiative.

The Corenas are leaders in Ossining’s green food scene, and part of the village’s widening circle of food sustainability.

FABLE FROM FARM TO TABLE

Established 2015

Owner: Tom Deacon

1311 Kitchawan Road / 914-862-0205

fablefoods.com

“We strive to utilize safe and modern technological advancements such as greenhouses, hydroponics, and vertical farming, to grow delicious tasting produce in the most sustainable way possible.”

—FROM FABLE’S WEBSITE

Westchester native Tom Deacon has had an unusual journey to his organic farm in Ossining. In 2015, after working in Manhattan as a film editor for ten years, he began to be seriously concerned about pesticides in his food and researched organic pesticide-free gardening using hydroponics. He then started a hydroponic garden in his spare apartment bedroom. Tom emailed several neighborhood restaurants on a lark to see if they would like to buy his basil, oregano, and kale—

and they all responded yes! He knew he was on to something, and so began his journey into farming. Deacon has taken classes at Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills and he learned about Sundial Farm in Ossining from a local Land Trust organization that connects aspiring young farmers with landowners.

Sundial Farm, land that has been farmed since the 1700s, is owned by Penny and Bill Hawkey who still live in the house and have a warm relationship with Tom.

He rented several acres, including part of the barn, and in 2015 began with hydroponic basil in the large greenhouse. He quickly moved on to planting an enormous array of vegetables and herbs. “Our selection includes Sweet Basil, Italian Parsley, Red Russian Kale, Rainbow Swiss Chard, Heirloom Tomatoes, Squash, Garlic, Oyster Mushrooms, Free-Range Eggs, and more”—much more! He gets most of his organic seeds from High Mowing Organic Seeds in Vermont and

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EATING IS AN AGRICULTURAL ACT.
—WENDELL BERRY

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Fable Farm's greenhouse for hydroponic produce. Photo: Tom Deacon

Johnny's Selected Seeds in Maine. "We make sure the plants receive the nutrition they need so that you do too."

Deacon also raises laying hens. A wide variety of breeds produce a wide variety of eggs, many in beautiful hues of blue and green. He started with 35 and is up to 200. They are currently producing 90 eggs a day and by summer should reach between 150 and 200 a day! He plans to start up a CSA this summer with egg shares available, and he will be selling at local farmers' markets.

His four beehives of established colonies will provide the farm with Fable honey this summer and he is producing a limited amount of maple syrup from trees he tapped this winter.

The tall, lanky and naturally friendly Deacon

encourages school groups to visit and enthusiastically shows them what "green" farming is all about, explaining terms like renewable and sustainability. He states on his beautiful website: "Not only can we provide our community with fresh, delicious produce, but they can truly know where their food came from. People seem to love the idea of hydroponics and we are more than happy to show them how it works."

Organic farming is protecting the environment. As Tom puts it, "If we treat our body and our planet correctly, they'll treat us the same way."

Deacon's produce has found customers in Ossining's new restaurants, as well, creating a circle of sustainability among the chefs of Ossining's green food scene.

MELIKE MEDITERRANEAN RESTAURANT



Established 2016

Chef and owner: Victor Fevré

199 Main Street / 914-236-3393

melikerestaurant.com

Melike, an elegant restaurant at the top of Main Street, specializes in Turkish cuisine and offers Greek and Middle Eastern classics and standards. Melike, a name in both Turkish and Arabic, means strong personality. And indeed, that can be said of Melike's vibrant menu, as well as their extensive wine list.

Classics include Turkish Chicken Sauté, Mediterranean Salad, Baba Ghanoush, and Grilled Lamb Shish Kebab.

Chef Fevré tells his story.

"I grew up in my father's restaurant in Turkey. It has been a family business. As I got older I became more interested in the kitchen and food. Back in Turkey my

family raises lambs on our land. With my family, I was involved in every step from the moment a lamb is born through butchering and ultimately cooking and serving the meal in our restaurant.

For us "farm-to-table" is not a new concept but the way things have always been done.

I worked in many Turkish and Middle Eastern restaurants in the Westchester area. When you work for somebody else there is no room for personal ideas. You cook their menu. So I decided to start my own restaurant, and Ossining seemed like a good fit. The town seemed to need a stable ethnic restaurant.

As far as being a part of the Ossining's new food scene, we are well aware of sustainability issues and we try to source everything locally and as responsibly as much as we can.

That's very much the beginning of it all. To sum it up I feel at home in the kitchen."

RECIPE TURKISH STUFFED CHICKEN

Serves 8

Ingredients

4 chicken breasts

Stuffing (1 tbsp pistachios, 1/2 cup rice, 1 tbsp currants)

Preparation

Cook rice for about 15 minutes until it is about 90 percent cooked. (It should still have a bite to it.)

Let the rice cool. Mix in pistachios and currants. Set aside.

Slice chicken breasts in half, lengthwise. Pound thin until about 1/2 inch thick.

Put a layer of stuffing mixture in the middle of each and roll it tight. Hold the rolls in place with toothpicks. Let them rest for 30 minutes, then remove toothpicks.

Deep fry the rolls at 375° for one minute until the outside is crispy.

Remove to a baking dish and bake at 450° for 20 minutes.

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION RESTAURANT AND BREWERY



Established 2017

**Owners: Scott Ryan, Glenn Sayers,
and Ron McKechnie**

35 Main Street / 914-714-9802 / 6degreesbp.com

Like so many of the new restaurants owners that have established businesses here in the last few years, partners Scott Ryan, Glenn Sayers, and Ron McKechnie are all about being part of a village and dedicated to being part of the new Ossining restaurant scene. Hence the name Six Degrees. "I want people to come in and get connected," Ryan says. "We want to be your neighborhood place."

Walk into Six Degrees, their new brew pub at the end of Main Street, and you're likely to be greeted warmly by one of the owners. Their friendly demeanor sets the tone for this casual and mellow meeting place. But don't let the casualness fool you—they are passionate about their craft beer. And now that they have their brewers license, they can begin to experiment with creating their own brews. Meanwhile, the dozen or so on tap change each weekend, keeping beer lovers happy and challenged. The menu is a combination of traditional pub fare and some higher end offerings.

Scott has been making his own beer for more than 25 years. Scott and Glenn began making craft beer together about five years ago, and have shown it off at private events—all the while planning their own craft

brew pub. Both are teachers in the Ardsley School District, and that is where they met and found their common love of craft beer.

For years, the three partners looked at spaces in towns across Westchester, but kept coming back to Ossining. The village felt right for them. And they knew they wanted to build their business in Ossining, where they live, to be able to give back to their community. When old

McSorley's tavern at 35 Main Street went up for sale, they knew they had found a home for the

restaurant and brewery. It was already set up as a bar and restaurant, so after their renovations and the addition of a spectacular hand-hewn 14-foot-long walnut bar, the partners were ready to open the door and let their dream happen.

And they are serious about being responsible green business owners as well, like so many of our new restaurant owners in the Village. The entire restaurant is on LED lights. They plan to shop locally and make use of Fable Farm and Tom Deacon's organic eggs. They've drastically reduced their use of paper and plastic—even their takeout bags are biodegradable. And they have plans to swap spent grains with local farms for use as compost to trade for produce. Truly, these three are a part of the circle of sustainability among the creators of Ossining's new food scene.

They knew they wanted to build their business in Ossining, where they live, to be able to give back to their community.

**FIND YOUR PLACE ON THE PLANET.
DIG IN,
AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FROM THERE.
—GARY SNYDER**

WOBBLE CAFÉ

Established 2004

Chef and owner: Rich Foshay

21 Campwoods Road / 914-762-3459

wobblecafe.com

While Miriam Haas can be considered the force behind bringing an awareness of environmental and food sustainability issues to Ossining, Rich Foshay, chef and owner of Wobble Café, is surely a founding father of a new village spirit. He was one of the first in the village to create a real neighborhood restaurant, using a “green” business model, buying local produce, and reducing the use of plastic and paper.

Walk into Wobble and you might think you have gone back in time, or better yet, come into the neighborhood restaurant you’ve always been looking for—with an old fashioned ice cream counter, comfortable mismatched tables and chairs, and memorabilia covering the walls. And the back section of the restaurant is a combination play area filled with toys and children’s library! This is the definition of a neighborhood family restaurant. “We’re where you come with your family,” Rich says. And they do. He serves over 150 meals a day on weekends.

The menu reads like a combination of your grandmother’s best breakfasts, 60s classics (try the vermonster!), and upscale favorites. The kids’ menu was carefully thought out when Wobble was in the planning stage. For example, Rich tested ten kinds of chicken fingers, sized for small hands, and picked the best tasting, rather than most affordable. This was both a chef’s decision and a business decision. If his were the best around, the kids would return. And they have been, for over a decade. He sees teenagers come in now who still remember those—and the cheese fondue!

Chef Foshay, always cheery, seems to be everywhere in his restaurant, cooking, organizing a catering event, talking to customers who have been

new ones. He grew up in the food world as his parents had food shops in Larchmont and Briarcliff. He says his training was more or less “in the fire,” a chef’s expression meaning learning on the job.

Before moving to Ossining, he had lived in Austin and became enamored of Tex-Mex cooking. So what is his favorite meal? The Tex-Mex Migas. In Spanish, Migas means a scramble, which it is—eggs scrambled with slightly crispy tortilla strips, topped with pinto beans, and chorizo. Plus the Wobble house-made pico de gallo and pickled jalapeños. Need we say more?

Chef Foshay’s take on how Ossining is becoming a “green” eating destination is that the new chefs and owners care deeply about their customer base. He calls this an organic growth, meaning each new owner is aware of the others and they help each other out. He also notes that our new restaurant owners have great interactions with their staff, as he does. These are people who are rooting in Ossining.

Wobble Café and Rich Foshay set a high bar for the new restaurants coming to the village and town, and have been a guiding light in Ossining’s green food scene.

Ice Cream Counter. Photo: Wendy Titell.



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BASTA RESTAURANT



Established 2012

**Chefs and owners: Leah DiSisto
and Roger Mason**

27 Campwoods Road / 914-236-3400 / basta27.com

Chefs and owners Leah DiSisto and Roger Mason, both graduates of the Culinary Institute of America and the Italian Culinary Academy, proudly tell us their mission is to “put the Italian back in American Italian cuisine.” They both left for Italy after graduation for work-study programs in restaurants, learning firsthand authentic Italian cuisine. Coming back to Ossining, where Leah grew up, both began planning their own restaurant while managing one in Croton. Roger had been buying restaurant equipment for years, which was waiting patiently in his mother’s basement. When tiny Vinnie’s Pizzeria on Campwoods Road became available, they jumped at the chance to establish an authentic Italian restaurant in Ossining.

Their menu reflects their time spent in Italy and the passion they have for Italian dishes. It is listed in the classic way an Italian meal is presented, from *antipasti* through *secondi*. And the dozen gourmet pizzas, crowd pleasers, could easily be called elegant Neapolitan.

Besides preparing dinner six nights a week, Leah caters children’s pizza parties, and Roger has a show-stopping “have-pizza-oven-will-travel” on wheels for

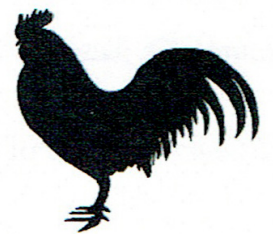
*The menu reflects their time
spent in Italy and the passion
they have for Italian dishes.*

private parties. “It’s been a cool couple of years,” says Roger.

They are serious about being a green restaurant. Their tagline could be “everything old is new again.” Each year, at the peak of the season, Leah and Roger use fresh tomatoes for homemade sauce, and process hundreds of pounds of tomatoes within three days—to insure highest quality. This is a family affair, with cousins and friends pitching in. Whenever we see tomato sauce as an ingredient on the menu, we know it is truly homemade—and wonderful.

The team has several laying hens at Roger’s mother’s house nearby, as well as a garden and fruit trees, and sends compost from the restaurant for use on the garden. They have reduced their use of plastic and use glass jars as much as possible, and get their cooking oil recycled.

The team buys locally, as well as from Meadows Farm in Yorktown for produce. “The Hudson Valley is better about getting food out,” Roger says, appreciating that transportation to market is one of the biggest hurdles for small farmers. Plans are underway to try hydroponics on their roof this summer, inspired by Fable Farms success. And they plan to source produce from Fable Farms soon, as part of the ever-widening circle of sustainability among Ossining’s green food scene.



BASTA'S MELANZANE ROLLATINI EGGPLANT ROLLUPS



Ingredients

1 medium eggplant, peeled, sliced lengthwise, 1/4 inch thick
Olive oil for frying
1 cup white flour (optional: gluten-free)

Egg batter:

6 eggs
¼ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, grated
¼ tsp. black pepper

Ricotta filling:

1 cup whole milk ricotta
¼ tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. black pepper
1 tbsp. Italian parsley, chopped

2 cups tomato sauce
½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, grated
8 oz. fresh mozzarella
extra virgin olive oil

Preparation

Salt eggplant slices and let rest for 25 to 35 minutes, then pat dry with paper towels. Set aside on a platter. Spread out the flour on a large plate. Whisk together egg batter ingredients in a large bowl and set aside. Line up the above in this order: eggplants, flour, egg batter.

Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a large frying pan. Olive oil should be 1 inch deep.

In batches, dredge each eggplant slice lightly in the flour, then in the egg batter, allowing excess batter to drip off. Drop the slices in a large frying pan. Fry each side until golden brown. Then let eggplant slices drain and cool on paper towels. Repeat until all slices have been fried, drained, and cooled. Move slices to a cutting board.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Mix ricotta filling ingredients thoroughly in a medium bowl.

Lay out the eggplant slices on the cutting board. Starting at one end, put a tablespoon of the ricotta filling, ¼ teaspoon grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, and a one-inch cube of the mozzarella. Starting at that end, roll up the eggplant slice. Continue this until all slices are rolled.

Coat the bottom of a 12 x 18 baking dish with tomato sauce. Place the rollups over the sauce in tight rows, seam-side down. Cover the rollups with a light coating of tomato sauce, a sprinkling of Parmigiano-Reggiano and extra virgin olive oil.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until tomato sauce is bubbling.

BASTA RESTAURANT, CHEF LEAH DiSISTO
27 CAMPWOODS ROAD OSSINING, NY 10562
914-236-3400
WWW.BASTA27.COM

LOS ABUELOS



Established 2016

Chef and owner: Olga Bonilla

197 South Highland Ave. / 914-502-0220

The sign on the door says *Bienvenidos a la casa de los Abuelos*—"Welcome to the home of the Grandparents." Los Abuelos means grandparents in Spanish. And this large, colorful, and comfortable Mexican restaurant says much about Chef Bonilla's family heritage. She began prepping and cooking in her paternal grandmother's kitchen at the age of ten. Her family comes from Tlaxcala, Mexico, a small state to the east of Mexico City. The family had several small restaurants there, always with grandma as chef. She loved to help her grandmother cook for big family social events as well. Participating in all this, Olga was training to become a chef. "My grandmother taught us all to respect and care for our customers, whom she considered our friends," she says. When Olga immigrated to New York as a teenager, she was already ready to run a restaurant!

The warm and cheery Chef Bonilla considers Los Abuelos a family restaurant. On weekends, especially, the 30 or so tables fill up with Ossining families enjoying a wide variety of Mexican regional cuisine. From classics familiar to Americans

like enchiladas and fajitas, to more adventurous fare like cactus salad, Los Abuelos has brought authentic Mexican cuisine to Ossining. Evenings are festive with live music.

When asked why she didn't locate on Main Street like so many other new restaurants, she explained that Mexican meals are leisurely affairs, a time for families to be together, unrushed. Parking downtown is difficult, so she chose a place with a parking lot. Problem solved!

Olga's grandmother also taught her early on how to shop for restaurant produce. "You got to see the product!" she told Olga.

Chef Bonilla learned well and shops each morning for local and organic produce. She especially loves Down to Earth Saturday market.

Olga truly loves Ossining, describing it very specifically—"a great town, humble, clean, quiet!" She is proud to be a green chef, reducing the use of plastic and paper, and she makes her own green cleaning products—with vinegar. And at her Ossining home, she and her oldest son have set up a recycling and composting area. They buy and cook only organic

produce for themselves. Chef Bonilla is deeply invested in the rebuilding of Ossining's new village spirit with its emphasis on green restaurants.

"My grandmother taught us all to respect and care for our customers, whom she considered our friends."

