

Italian Way of Life @Union Square

L. A. (September 10, 2015)



Take a break and check out this new establishment in Union Square serving lunch, dinner, snacks, coffee and cocktails. The service may be quick but the place is still authentically Italian.

There's a special new corner in Union Square serving up the best in Italian food, and its name captures small town life in the old country. Al Vicoletto, roughly translated, means "in the back alley," but it's difficult to describe the significance of the word vicoletto in Italian.

Vicoletti, or small vicoli, suggests an Italian way of life, a place where you can kick back, stop by for a few minutes, grab a snack, catch up with a friend, or savor a coffee while perusing the newspaper before resuming the frenetic New York rhythm we all live by.

In its Manhattan incarnation, says partner Alberto Tartari, "Al Vicoletto is located between two major avenues and really is a little alcove couched between the city's buildings."

Casual, modern, Italian

Tartari has two other successful establishments in Manhattan, [Baretto](#) [2] and [Melograno](#) [3]. But Al Vicoletto, given its location and a few special projects in the works, has a personality all its own.

“It’s a casual café and wine bar,” says Tartari, “with a modern Italian kitchen serving simple and healthy dishes made with quality ingredients and a wine list that includes excellent, hard-to- find wines.

Our aim is to have a selection of quality wines that aren’t as well known outside of Italy and a full bar with top-shelf liquor.” And in Al Vicoletto’s case, reasonable prices don’t mean lower quality.

“Having gluten- free products and dishes is also a priority,” adds Tartari. But that’s not all. The spare, elegantly furnished establishment also has an outdoor space that resembles one of those small courtyards that catch you by surprise while traversing the vicoletti in Italy.

It’s a small but endearing space, at once romantic and relaxing in the typically Italian way the establishment promises.

So what exactly is Al Vicoletto? A restaurant? A café? A place to meet friends for breakfast? Or lunch? Or dinner? Actually it’s all of this, and more. “It’s also a market,” says Tartari.” “Our shelves are stocked with hard-to-find, quality products that represent the best in Italian gourmet cooking, which starts with small and mid-sized companies.” Right. Typical of Italy’s borghi and vicoletti.

The ‘Jerry Factor’

Another partner is [Jerry Turci](#) [4], owner of Jerry’s Homemade (pay a visit to his delicious all- Italian gourmet store just off the Washington Bridge in New Jersey, where you’ll find great food, a stunning selection of wines and a sweet, homey atmosphere).

Jerry’s experience as an importer and retailer guarantees that all of the shelves here at Vicoletto are brimming with recherché Italian brands. For example? According to Tartari, “Thanks to Jerry, even a simple breakfast transports you to Italy. It’s as if you were in an Italian home or at the bar before going to work. Customers can taste traditional packaged sweets impossible to find elsewhere in New York, as well as biscotti and fresh croissants made by a bakery we trust.”

Anything else? “We’re working on a weekend brunch special featuring live music. We’ve also got several other events in mind,” says Tartari, who can’t seem to contain himself. But there’s a reason for every item he lists off; his goal is to introduce Manhattan to select, quality Italian goods. (And, of course, make Al Vicoletto a New York staple.) “We’re trying to meet our clients’ demands while also embodying the best Italian traditions.”

Well then, let us be the first to say, “Benvenuto, Al Vicoletto!”

[AL VICOLETTO](#) [5]

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