

The New Lady of Casa Dolce

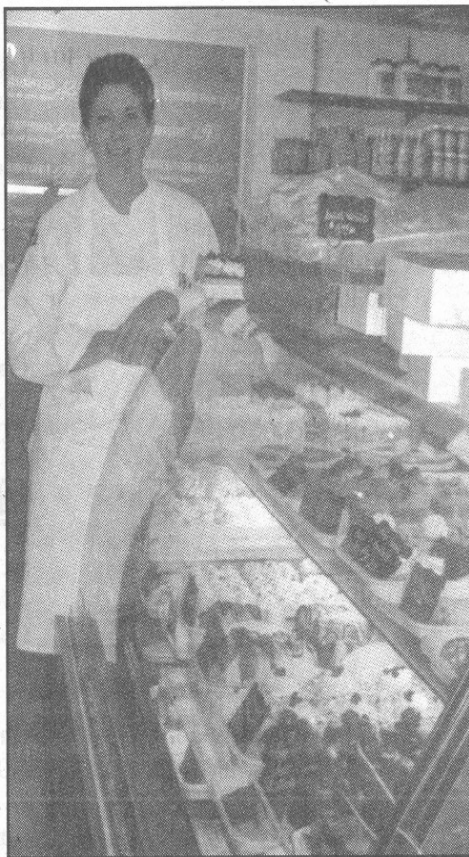
Ever since she was a child shopping ethnic markets with her grandparents for fresh seasonal foods, Margie Rose Onofrio Axelrod has had a passion for food preparation. Throughout her years as a young mother, feeding her husband, children, extended family and friends became the focus of her life, but she didn't think about making food a profession until two of her three daughters were grown.

In 1989 Margie began taking professional cooking classes and earned her certificate from what is now known as the Western Reserve School of Cooking in Hudson, OH. At the same time, she took classes at Giovanni's Ristorante, where she met then executive chef, Sergio Abramof.

For three years (1992-95) she worked as an apprentice, working at a variety of restaurants and starting a catering business with him. When Abramof decided to open his own restaurant, Sergio's, Margie joined as a partner. There, Margie's duties included cooking, ordering food, booking and planning parties, meeting with clients and managing the kitchen and staff. She also learned the basics of food costs, taking inventory, quality control, and profit/loss statements, with the goal to run an efficient and profitable business.

In 1998 Margie joined the Baricelli Inn, working as Banquet Director and Chef and answering only to owner Paul Minnillo. Here,

not only did she learn more



about how to make sure that each scheduled event was profitable, but she also

learned how to be sure to execute each event so that her discerning clients were delighted. She was the chef and coordinator of all events, and she also worked closely with Minnillo on all other operations at Baricelli. As part of the restaurant community, Margie established and maintained many contacts from the burgeoning local food scene, these contacts included chefs Michael Simon and Zach Bruell, and restaurateurs Brad Friedlander and Carl Quagliata.

Margie worked with others in the community to produce such events as Taste of the NFL and Share Our Strength. In addition, while performing her duties at the Baricelli Inn, Margie secured a contract with The College Club

to cater exclusively for them, which she did for four years.

In 2000, a group of country clubs, the Weymouth Valley Inc. County Clubs, offered Margie a position with the understanding that she would open a new club called Signature of Solon. She had not yet finished her commitment to Minnillo, but she consulted with WVICC for several months.

A year later, she joined Weymouth in Medina. At Weymouth, she focused on revamping all menus, both for the banquet facilities and dining rooms. Starting from square one, she opened Signature of Solon in 2002 and answered only to the owners. There, her titles included Acting General Manager, Executive Chef and Events Director, and she

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still supervised all of the food at Weymouth.

The year 2005 brought with it another facility, La Centre. Here, Margie modernized the menus and hired new chefs and management staff. Three months later, WVICC took over Avalon, where Margie again updated menus and hired new kitchen and management staff. She also had responsibility for all food operations at Fox Meadow, the group's third country club. By this time, Margie was Food and Beverage Director for five properties.

Margie left Signature of Solon in early 2007 and began work as a consultant for Michael Schwartz at The Boneyard. After eighteen years as a professional, Margie's dedication and passion for the food industry is still

as strong as ever and this new chapter of operating the Casa Dolce in Mayfield Heights promises to be very exciting.

With the holidays rapidly approaching, Margie and Casa Dolce will offer several of the Italian traditional biscotti and cookies, including those with figs and sesame seeds and specialty cakes including Tiramisu.

The family has joined in the business including her newly married daughter, Jenn (and her husband Terrence Pietrondi).

Margie's maternal grandparents, the Bonadonnas, emigrated from Montallegro (Agrigento, Sicily). Her paternal grandparents (William), the Onofrios, came from Sant'Agata in Sicily. ❖