

Business

Details—and Family—Take the Cake at Bronxville's Chantilly Patisserie

Owned by two sisters and their mother, Chantilly, which opened earlier this year, serves up everything from custom-made cakes to almond croissants.

By Maria Velonardo, Patch Staff | Feb 8, 2011 8:30 pm ET | Updated Feb 8, 2011 8:39 pm ET

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If you happen to walk by Chantilly Patisserie on Parkway Road at around 2:30 a.m., you may see Mariana Delgado Gambini heading in to start her workday.

For the next few hours, Mariana—who owns the patisserie with her mother Mirta and sister Maria—and her team will work to create over 100 items that will be served at the bakery that day.

"It's like competition, you know. We open up at 7 a.m. [and] we have to have everything done at 6:45 in order to make the deadline," she says. "And it's a challenge every day for me to get faster and keep the consistency of all the products."

Those products include everything from almond croissants, lemon meringue tarts and apple caramel turnovers to baguettes, scones and French macaroons.

And chocolate addicts definitely won't feel left out. "'The Andree' is one of the most popular and best deserts," Mariana says, describing it as, "hazelnut layers with milk chocolate and dark chocolate cream with edible gold leaves on top, with red currants. It's the perfect combination for a chocolate lover."

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The patisserie, which officially opened on Jan. 7, is something that was always talked about in the artistically inclined family (Mirta has an interior design and art background, Maria has a degree in fine art), who moved from Argentina to the U.S. 18 years ago.

And the sisters, who live in Yonkers (as do their parents), spent lots of time in Bronxville.

"We saw that there was a store [and] it was going to be up for rent," says Mariana, who has a degree in pastry and baking from Johnson and Wales. "We were like, oh my God that's it, that's our opportunity there."

The family worked for a few months to get the patisserie ready for business, including changing all the details—from the light bulbs to the stairs—of the space, which previously housed an electrical shop.

"It's not your everyday pastry shop. You walk in here and the aroma, the architectural aspect of the entire place, how everything's laid out, to every single little tiny dessert that we have, from breads, cakes, cupcakes, French macaroons," Mariana says, "...To us, its something different from what is around."

Along with the handmade pastries, the shop focuses on the details, giving them delicate, sweet touches. Everything from the boxes to the sugar packets to the napkins were custom-made, Mariana says.

Each cake is custom-made to order as well.

"In the cake program, we really want to make everything custom," says Maria, the head cake designer. "You don't see cakes outside in the display because we want them freshly done."

Mariana adds, "You want a simple cake with simple piping on it, that's cool. You want a seven-tiered cake with amazing handcrafted work, we do that for you. Every occasion should be special and custom to you."

And how has the number of cake shows (think *Cake Boss* and the like) affected the business of making the treats?

While Mariana admits that people sometimes don't realize the time commitment it takes to create such an elaborate dessert (she tells of the time they spent nearly 26 hours creating 300 hand-made flowers for a cake), she says it allows people to take ideas they have and actually have them created.


And soon, possibly as early as next week, cake-lovers will be able to see process live. Maria says they're planning to create a space in the patisserie where customers can watch her at work decorating the cakes.

"Instead of sitting home and watching TV, you can come and watch us do the cakes," she says.

And while there are the usual quick spats and disagreements working with family, the sisters say the partnership is a positive one.

"For us to be not even 30 and having our own business with our family is very special to us. It's very important. We're a very close family and for us to be able to share that and share all these amazing products, I think it's pretty much a dream come true," Mariana says.

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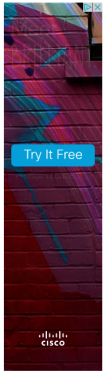
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