

✨ DOBBS FERRY BUSINESS PROFILE ✨



BELLACOSA WINE & TAPAS BAR

147 Main Street

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Frank Donato

Owner/Operator

Combine the homemade tastes of Southern Italy, a deep appreciation for fine wines, and years of pizzeria ownership and you have Dobbs Ferry's Bellacosa Wine & Tapas Bar. Located at 147 Main Street, just south of Cedar, the restaurant shares an owner, a kitchen, and some powerful culinary history with downtown's venerable Brick Oven Pizza. The popular pizzeria launched in 1993, when Frank Donato, now 56, decided he could raise the quality of local slices.

"I knew I could create a better pie," he says. Brick Oven pioneered the area's home pizza delivery business, establishing a loyal clientele eager to partake of homemade ice creams sold at the adjacent restaurant space. But while his businesses boomed, Donato nurtured a more ambitious goal; to bring Calabrian cooking to the river towns. The debut of Bellacosa in 2020 saw the dream realized.

The food of Calabria, located in the 'toe' of the Italian boot, incorporates fresh ingredients, savory spices, crusty breads, and the best wines from all of Italy. Frank's childhood was awash in those comestible traditions. "I was raised by a mother, grandmother, and three aunts who always involved me in the kitchen as a kind of taste-tester; their own guinea pig" he recalls. "But as I was asked to try everything, I learned about different flavors and started to understand what it took to produce great food."

Frank Donato hoped those lessons would pay off when Bellacosa debuted in January of 2020. The timing, though, made those initial months challenging. "It was tough, but the pizzeria carried my load and, by reducing expenses and adding outdoor seating, we had a good first summer," he says.

Fast forward four years, and Bellacosa now enjoys a loyal clientele. Diners return for signature dishes, exemplary wines, curated food and drink pairings, and artisanal pizzas. Sauces are lovingly prepared daily, breads are baked each morning, and premade or frozen ingredients are strictly forbidden – that is, aside from six flavors of homemade ice cream. "We're unique in serving small portions, including many tapas and breads, and in making everything fresh, to order, and on premises," says Frank. "Our local favorites include angry chicken, spiced with basil garlic; homemade eggplant meatballs; a sweet spread made with fig jam, truffle honey, and pistachios served with our homemade crostini, and ricotta gnocchi" he adds.

Farfalle carbonara, lamb pops, and artisanal pizzas are standard menu items, as are tapas, an array of cocktails and beers, and a rotating menu of daily specials that harken back to the days before family members journeyed to the New York area in 1965. The group of roughly 30 relatives were lured to Dobbs Ferry by the promise of fellow countrymen and wonderful local opportunity.

"We'd heard it was a quaint, close-knit community, much like those in Calabria," says the Dobbs Ferry entrepreneur. Today, 20 members and descendants of the original group remain in the village. For them, Bellacosa is not just a treasured eatery but the nostalgia embodiment of fine Italian dining. Awash in dark wood and brick walls, Bellacosa site hosts parties, sponsors events -from live jazz performances to speed-dating meetups – and is a site that still delivers day-to-day joy for friends, relatives, and newcomers.

"Meeting my customers and watching them enjoy the food always makes me feel happy and at peace," he says. Bellacosa serves food from noon to 9:30 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday and stays open until 10:30 pm on Friday.

