

Alysha & Chef Giovanni Prignano *Bella Vista Ristorante Italiano*

Alysha and Chef Giovanni Prignano have been making guests happy at Bella Vista Ristorante Italiano in Fruit Cove for two years. Each night, although guests yearn for recipes of each family-inspired dish, it's impossible to share because they're created with Giovanni's love. It began when they met as strangers in New Jersey, a romantic story that unfolds while seated near family photos, a mural of the Italian countryside and narrow streets of Salerno. At Bella Vista, you're welcomed into their 'family home' in Sicignano Degli Alburni, wondering when you might meet 'la Famiglia'!

Born into a family of farmers and helping the family from the time he was a little bambino, by 9 years old Giovanni declared, "I'm going to be a chef." He always had an affinity for food and coming to America. His love of food started with the care that his family infused into their own home. His teen years were spent studying cooking until he came to the metro New York region where he worked in restaurants while learning how to speak English and meet his love, Alysha. Though he knew very little English, today it's evident that he's fearless and determined. His passion for cooking is the biggest force in his life. Alysha knows that "Giovanni isn't afraid of anything. If Giovanni could move across continents, we could make a change and move to Florida; I wanted this for both of us." Together they have worked diligently to expand their modest dining room into a wildly popular destination with a very desirable al fresco patio and charming bar and party room too. Giovanni's scratch kitchen prepares everything made to order, a tribute to his mother and grandmother Filomena. The intentionality of his cooking is an important aspect of what Alysha admires in her husband. They're a dynamic duet of restaurant success!

Giovanni's Mediterranean cooking style reveals an ancient openness about food. How wonderful when dishes are prepared with his passion to create an Italian meal that begins with individual ingredients sourced with as much fervor as when he's cooking! Whether it's patrons who have dined at Bella Vista since opening who have their favorite specialties or newcomers, they recognize Chef's insatiable excitement to please them with new pastas or cocktails.

Alysha is proud of Giovanni's vision and ability to execute his food flawlessly. There have been numerous additions to this remarkable menu, although the Cacio E Pepe (fettucine in a creamy sauce with black pepper tossed tableside in a signature giant cheese wheel) will always be 'The one' that commands attention! The Pork Chop Valdostano was such a popular special that it now has its own place on the menu. Baked Clams just like you get in New York wins the appetizer honor and Short Rib Ravioli is a creamy thrill. Bella Vista has added many seafood dishes, a new Italian pasta that's coming this season and finally, their liquor license with fashionable martinis – especially the Pistachio Martini! With a pulsating demand for catering, Giovanni's great food is also on the road with an evolving menu of inspiring and fresh choices. This wonderful food should be enjoyed with a moment of silence. The Prignano's have masterfully merged the culture of Italian dining with Old World hospitality.

Leigh Cort



Chef Giovanni's incredible baked stuffed clams oreganata style - a dish unique in our area!