



Bistro Brings Mediterranean Taste to Downtown

Battle Creek Enquirer | Sarah Lambert | January 12, 2011

The sounds of sizzling meat, quiet conversation and soft music set the atmosphere for a new downtown restaurant with a familiar flavor.

Malia Mediterranean Bistro opened last month at 34 West Michigan Avenue in downtown Battle Creek, but the restaurant's cuisine is well-known to some residents.

The restaurant's owner, Jeff Samson, ran an Italian eatery in downtown Marshall, also called Malia after his daughter.

The Italian bistro closed in 2003, according to Enquirer archives, and Samson and Chef Trent Mead went into business selling takeout meals at Minges Brook Felpausch, which later became Zucca's before it closed in 2009.

"I've taken classes when Jeff Samson used to teach cooking classes, and I used to buy their products when they were at Beckley Road Felpausch, so I've been a fan of them for a while," said Battle Creek resident Sue Plummer.

Plummer and her daughter, Amy, were among the lunch customers last week. The lunch menu offers sandwiches, salads and pastas ranging from \$10 to \$15.

We tried the lamb feta burger (\$13), a thick hunk of grilled meat with a burst of blended spice and adorned with feta cheese, tomato, lettuce and cucumber mint aioli.

We washed it down with a sparkling orange Pellegrino. A sip of the stuff is sweet as it hits the tip of the tongue but has a sour bite after it washes down.

Plummer and her daughter shared cream of mushroom soup, lobster ravioli and a flank steak salad. They'd had the soup and lobster at some of Samson's other food venue ventures, Plummer said.

"I knew it was going to be good," she said.

Owner Samson did not reply to requests for an interview, but his restaurant has a warm, inviting feel.

Its narrow downtown interior features one wall of exposed brick and another painted dark brown with white paneling.

The paneled wall plays host to a large chalk board with handwritten specials. We tried the red velvet tower desert. The tower is a rich blend of chocolate, red velvet cake and walnut cream cheese.

The chalkboard also lists drinks. Malia offers local beers such as Dark Horse and Bell's, and red and white wines ranging from \$6 to \$8 a glass and \$20 to \$42 a bottle.

The dinner menu entrees cost \$12 to \$30 and include beef, duck, chicken and pasta options.

Sarah Lambert can be reached at 966-0589 or slambert@gannett.com.



Malia Mediterranean Bistro is one of downtown Battle Creek's newest businesses. Cozy and inviting, the dining room welcomes you to taste, savor, enjoy.



If you go:

- * WHERE: Malia Mediterranean Bistro.
- * FARE: Mediterranean-inspired sandwiches, salads, pasta and soups.
- * HOURS: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Friday, 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Saturday.
- * PRICE: Entrees start at \$9.
- * BAR: Local beer and wine.
- * INFO: Owned by Jeff Samson. For more information, call 441-2900 or visit www.maliafoods.com.