



SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

FOOD & BEVERAGE PROFESSIONALS

Photos by Martin Boling



Hilary Martel.

Hilary Martel

OWNER, FETA KITCHEN & CAFE

When Hilary Martel opened Feta Kitchen & Cafe in 2018, she wanted a place where people could make healthy food choices and get their selections quickly—and a place where children have their own play space. She and her husband, Hartzell, have been business owners for many years—Hartzell’s Ice Cream and Jiffy Treet—but wanted to offer Bloomington a different restaurant choice. “It’s so hard to eat something that is healthy and enjoyable in a fast-casual dining experience,” she says. “That’s the concept of Feta.”

Martel, a graduate of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University, has designed a menu where customers can create their own salad or grain bowl with clean proteins and fresh vegetables, and order smoothies with almond milk and no added sugar. “People can eat clean and healthy without waiting a long time to get their food,” she says.

Having lived in Bloomington for 20 years, the Louisville, Kentucky, native says she knew she had found the perfect location when the development at 600 E. Hillside Drive opened. “People in that area are walking and cycling and running, and I think our food and what we offer really fits in with people who live a healthy and active lifestyle.” For more information, visit Feta Kitchen at fetakitchen.com.

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Mohey Osman (seated) with Katie Young and Mike Carson.

Mohey Osman

OWNER, DA VINCI

Mohey Osman has always enjoyed cooking, but didn’t pursue his culinary dream until moving to Indianapolis’ Broad Ripple neighborhood in 2005. There he opened several Middle Eastern restaurants before transitioning to pizzerias. In all, he has owned 10 restaurants, but Bloomington’s Da Vinci—at 250 S. Washington St.—has his sole attention with its chic European, industrial atmosphere, authentic ingredients, and competitive prices.

“When I started, I wasn’t focusing on opening my own restaurant, but then I fell in love with creating dishes and making people happy,” says Osman, a Cairo, Egypt, native who has been in the U.S. since 1996. “I grew up in a different culture and food was a big deal. Everything had to be made from scratch. When I came here, the food didn’t taste right to me, so I asked my mom for recipes, and then I started doing my own thing.”

While traveling abroad, Osman would study food and then return home to experiment for his friends and family. Most of Da Vinci’s pizzas—made with ingredients imported from Italy—are his own creations. “I want people to come in and try my pizza and say, ‘It’s the best I’ve ever had!’” he says. “I want to make sure every creation could win an award.” For more information, visit vincipie.com.



Stéphanie Laparre.

Stéphanie Laparre

OWNER, LA VIE EN ROSE

Stéphanie Laparre attributes her success with La Vie en Rose to giving people an experience they can’t get elsewhere in Bloomington—a Parisian bistro-inspired café with genuine, quality food and European-style coffee.

Raised in Toulouse, France, Laparre taught primary school before chasing her dream to create authentic French pastries. She trained in Toulouse with French pastry chef Jean Marie Denis, and in the U.S. She now runs her little French café at 402 1/2 W. 6th St. Just starting her third year, Laparre says customers have come to depend on authenticity and consistency in her food offerings. “I think it’s very important not to disappoint our customers,” she says. “We offer great atmosphere, friendly and experienced staff, attention to details, and, of course, quality of goods.”

Laparre’s bestsellers are her quiches, but she also offers small plates of cheese or charcuterie with fresh baguettes, soup, desserts, and pastries. She recently added *mignardises*—luxurious, bite-sized French treats—for ordering and catering. She serves French wines and is proud of her special coffee selection. “We prepare coffee European style, so if you like a long, weak coffee on the go, you can’t get your fix from us,” she says. “But if you miss it or are eager to try something different, we can help.” For information, visit lavieenrosebloomington.org.



(l-r) Erika Branham, Steve Morgan, Angela Brock, and Robyn Mitchell.

Angela Brock

MANAGER, SOUTHERN STONE

Manager Angela Brock has had a busy couple of months since starting work at Southern Stone eatery. The restaurant, at 405 W. Patterson Drive, was formerly known as Sweet Grass before reopening under the new brand on January 7.

Brock, along with her husband, Derrick, and their two sons, moved to the Bloomington area last fall after spending eight years in Virginia Beach, Virginia, pursuing her husband's military career. While in Virginia, with her husband in the military and her sons getting older, Brock decided to pursue a management degree at Tidewater Community College as a way to occupy her time. Having worked in restaurants for 13 years in various capacities—including waiting tables and tending bar—she loved the industry so much that she knew she wanted to eventually move into a management position.

After graduating, she worked in management for the BRAVO Cucina Italian restaurant chain in Virginia Beach for three years before moving to the No Frill Bar & Grill. Being in an atmosphere that was more personable showed Brock the kind of place she wanted to run, and that gave her more focus when she and her family moved to Indiana with plans to finally settle down.

Here, Brock was offered a management position by Aliza Cazzell, executive director for Project Corporate, parent company of Southern Stone. Brock knew it was a right fit after the warm welcome she was given by Cazzell and Dallas Honeycutt, Southern Stones' assistant general manager.

"We love Bloomington, and I love Southern Stone—it's so beautiful and delicious," Brock says, explaining that artist Adam Long has painted floor-to-ceiling murals depicting scenes directly tied to dishes on the menu, including one that depicts the quarry that created the famous Empire State Building in 1930. "Southern Stone is named to pay homage to the history of limestone in Indiana."

Southern Stone kept about 70% of the Sweet Grass menu items and will be introducing daily and weekly specials that have more organic, more local, and more southern Midwest- and traditional Southern-gear dishes. Popular pimento dishes were retained, along with the fried green tomatoes and Cajun/Creole signature dishes. They are also introducing daily and weekly specials via social media as well as a new martini menu.

Live music will be presented Wednesday through Saturday nights and during Sunday brunch.

The Southern Stone rebranding is only one of several projects that will be under Project Corporate's restaurant brand, The Wow Food Group. Other ventures include rebranding the former Colorado Steakhouse as Hank's and launching a catering service called Wow Catering and Events. For information, visit southernstonebloomington.com.



Emma Daniels-Howell. Courtesy photo

Emma Daniels-Howell

FRONT-OF-HOUSE MANAGER,
THE UPTOWN CAFE

Emma Daniels-Howell, who was raised in Morgantown, Indiana, as the youngest of four sisters, looks back on her career with The Uptown Cafe and says the experience has made her a more confident person with invaluable skills. She started in 2014 as a hostess at the restaurant, during her senior year at Indiana University, and eventually met her husband at the eatery. They now have a 2-year-old daughter.

"Uptown has meant a great deal to our little family," Daniels-Howell says. "Uptown took a chance and groomed me, giving me opportunity after opportunity to grow and become a larger part of the management team." In August 2019, she was promoted to the front-of-house manager position, leading the service team in hiring, training, scheduling, and managing all aspects of the service side of the restaurant, which features fine, American, casual-style dining with Cajun-inspired, European, and regional cuisine.

"Emma is a true testament to hard work and consistency," says The Uptown's general manager, Galen Cassady. "Her dedication and commitment to The Uptown Cafe and its regulars made her an excellent choice to lead our service team. She continues to exemplify hospitality with all of our guests, whether they are visiting for the first time or have joined us for decades." For more information, visit the-uptown.com.



(l-r) Steve Martinez, Mary Finney, Jake Wood, Matt Harakal, and Carol Herrington.

Matt Harakal

CHEF/OWNER, 21 NORTH EATERY

Chef Matt Harakal says he always felt the spirit of one day owning a restaurant, but he wanted to wait until the time felt right before acting on it. That moment came when Connie and Tony Musgrave, original owners of 21 North Eatery at 21 N. Jefferson St. in Martinsville, decided to relocate and sell the establishment. Harakal had been 21 North's executive chef and spearheaded its menu since the restaurant opened in October 2017, so when the Musgraves wanted to sell, he knew the time had come for ownership and he bought the restaurant in January 2019.

While he has always enjoyed cooking, Harakal says he didn't get serious about it until he went to culinary school. An Ohio native with a Ukrainian and French background, he grew up all over the Northeast and graduated from Johnson & Wales University in North Miami, Florida. He has trained under French Master and Michelin-starred chefs and spent many years honing his cooking skill for the Ritz-Carlton hotel chain.

Eventually settling down in Paoli, Indiana, Harakal loves commuting to Martinsville to work in his own kitchen with his own crew. He especially enjoys serving up his self-described Kentuckiana-European cuisine, which includes such dishes as shrimp and pork belly grits, crispy fish and chips, coq au vin, and Grandma's Apple Cake, all on the same table. However, diners describe the menu as contemporary American gastropub with strong southern influences.

For diners searching for fancier fare, dinner features include pan-seared filet with cabernet jus or lobster and Mornay sauce, Earl Gray and honey-glazed salmon, or pan-seared jumbo scallops over saffron parmesan risotto with sangria reduction. From the bar, he offers signature cocktails and local brews.

"We just want to make good food," he says, noting that his staff spends three days making au jus classically. "Full of flavor and rich. If we are going to make fish and chips, we just want to make good fish and chips."

Located on the downtown courthouse square, 21 North Eatery offers a rustic-modern ambiance with its exposed brick, arched walls, industrial lighting, hardwood floors, and wooden tables, combining textures and styles for a space that is both elegant and cozy. Harakal says that having an inviting and interesting atmosphere is as important as great food, drink, and service when striving to create the best possible experience for guests.

"Owning a restaurant is 100%, without a doubt, never a dull moment," Harakal says. "I don't necessarily strive to be different than other restaurants, but I definitely want to provide the best experience for our guests."

Harakal believes being committed to offering dishes with fresh, local ingredients—such as the Fischer Farms 16-ounce smoked pork chop with red onion jam—is invaluable to the overall positive dining experience and keeps people coming back again and again. And that's what he wants—a loyal clientele.

One of his favorite things to do is mingle through the dining room after spending his evening in the hot kitchen. He will greet regulars and first-time diners and have a moment with them to hear what they liked or didn't. That interaction is key in keeping him inspired for creating new menu items and nightly specials. It also propels new meal pairings with local breweries, wineries, and distilleries. "I just love being a part of that," he says, adding that he especially enjoys hearing them call out, "We'll see you next time, Chef."

Harakal understands his role in the larger community and strives to be an active part. "Martinsville, Indiana, is where you'll find great shops, great food and drink, live music, and really cool people," he says. "Come see us!"

For more information, visit 21northeateryandcellar.com or stop by the restaurant.