



ABOVE: Chefs Marco De Simone and Andrea Fadda have something to smile about. BELOW: Grilled seafood is a signature of the eatery.

Hitting THE blue Zone

Weston's new Italian concept, Zona Blu, brings the flavor, beauty and enchantment of Sardinia to residential South Florida.

By Jennifer Agress

Lately, all anyone can talk about are the “Blue Zones”—those parts of the world, like Sardinia, with the highest concentrations of healthy, happy people living 100 years or more. And thanks to Sardinian sisters Sheila David and Debbie Bautista, and their restaurateur uncle, Giulio Ledda, we now have a taste of its magic right here in Weston: Zona Blu. The brainchild of Executive Chef Andrea Fadda, this new addition to the Weston restaurant scene first opened its doors in September 2015—and to the delight of anyone who’s been there, it’s been packed ever since.

A lifelong dream of the Sardinian sisters, owning and opening a spot like Zona Blu didn’t become a reality until Fadda—who has opened countless high-end restaurant and hotel dining concepts all over the world, including Pappa & Ciccia, which still stands in Miami’s South of Fifth neighborhood—came to them with an idea.



table hopping



TOP: One of Zona Blu's specialties is the Fregola Sarda ai Frutti di Mare, consisting of mixed seafood with Sardinian couscous. BELOW: The light, airy interior of the restaurant.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICARDO MEJIA

“Sardinia is a really small island, and everybody knows everybody. We knew Andrea because of his restaurant there and we knew he was a phenomenal chef,” says Debbie. “Andrea owned a restaurant in Miami, but it’s more touristy there. He really wanted to open a family restaurant where he can feature more Sardinian cuisine, which is his passion. Being locals, he asked us if we would try and find a location in Weston. We were stay-at-home moms at the time, but we started helping him—eventually, we decided that we wanted to be a part of it.”

Walk through its doors and into the bright, airy restaurant, all surrounded by floor-to-ceiling-glass windows, and you’ll start to get a sense of just why the partners love it as much as they do. Filled with light tables, relaxed vibes, a large traditional, Italian wood-fired pizza oven, barrels of Sardinian wine on tap, and blue accents everywhere you turn—including delicate blue orchids, which form every centerpiece—Zona Blu is as enchanting as it is delicious.

And speaking of delicious, with Andrea at the helm, the menu proves there’s nothing he can’t do. Start with the Soufflé al Pecorino, a delicate mix of Pecorino cheese and roasted Portobello mushrooms in a black truffle sauce, and then move on to the Spaghetti al Cartoccio, spaghetti and fresh seafood doused in tomato sauce and surrounded by a perfectly thin pillow of pizza dough. Wrap up your meal with the sweet Seadas con



Miele Sardo, Sardinian puff pastry stuffed with lightly fried sweet cheese, then drizzled with Sardinian honey. Pair it all with a glass of wine, and you’ll understand just why Andrea and Zona Blu are quickly becoming household names in the area.

“There is a lot of good Italian cuisine here in Weston, but it’s different,” says David. “When you look at our menu, you’re going to see a lot of things you’re not familiar with. It’s not typical Italian food, but I think people here appreciate the fact that we’re unique, and when they taste our food, they realize how fresh it is. We’re also heavy on seafood, and there aren’t a lot of great seafood restaurants around here. So I think we’ve really tapped into a niche in Weston.”

But of course, at the core of all its success, Zona Blu is nothing more complicated than an authentic, passionate ode to the partners’ beloved island, paradisiacal Sardinia. “We love our island; we spent summers there growing up. It’s a gorgeous island, it has a very rich history, the food is amazing and the concept is beautiful,” says Bautista. “If you search for Sardinia, every picture you find will be of the most spectacular blue water you’ve ever seen in your life. We’re very proud of it—and we’re so glad we could bring a taste of Sardinia to our new home, Weston.”

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