



Staff photo by Erin Beck

John Cole, maintenance supervisor for Charles Pointe Hospitality, puts up a sign at a new restaurant coming to Charles Pointe, Mia Margherita.

New restaurant to feature pizza oven fired by coal

Mia Margherita to open at Charles Pointe this summer

by Erin Beck
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BRIDGEPORT — A new Italian restaurant is on its way to Harrison County, but this one is a little different than the rest.

Mia Margherita, an Italian/American restaurant at Charles Pointe in Bridgeport, will be known for its Neapolitan style pizza baked in a coal-fired pizza oven, according to Scott Duarte, managing director for CP Hospitality.

The restaurant will be located in Charles Pointe Commons and is scheduled to open in mid-August.

After five to six years of research, management came up with a creative concept for the restaurant, according to Duarte.

"What we're doing is we're going to the original way pizza was introduced in America back in the early 1900s," he said. "Immigrants came over from Italy, and they introduced pizza ovens fired with coal."

Tim Goots will serve as executive chef at the restaurant, while Joe Vessecchia III will be the food and beverage manager.

Duarte, who has held culi-

nary leadership positions at The Greenbrier, Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina and Tamarack, will remain the managing director of CP Hospitality, Charles Pointe's hospitality division and the operating partner for the restaurant.

Additional staff members are still being hired, according to Duarte.

Duarte, Goots and Vessecchia worked collaboratively to develop an original menu inspired by basic Italian dishes.

Duarte calls it "Italian comfort food."

While the menu will include traditional pastas associated with Italian cooking, it will also include Mene-sha, a rustic soup comprised of chicken broth, potatoes, sausage and vegetables with a crusty bread, as well as a pasta and bean dish with a light broth and parmesan cheese.

"It's a heartier down to the basics kind of cooking," Goots said.

In preparation for the restaurant opening, Goots attended the International School of Pizza in Los Angeles to study different aspects of pizza making, including how to prepare

the ideal dough.

Goots, who is the current chef at the Bridgeport Conference Center, expects the pizza to be a big hit in surrounding communities.

The combination of using a coal-fired oven and allowing the dough to mature creates a distinct thin crust and lighter pizza, he said.

Other menu items include several soups, fresh salads made from local produce, Italian-style tapas, paninis and a homemade chocolate ricotta cheesecake, among other items.

The restaurant will be full-service but casual, with a moderately-priced menu, according to Duarte.

Guests can also choose from an extensive list of wines, mostly Italian, and imported Italian beer.

Charles Pointe plans for additional restaurants and is continuing to research what styles of restaurant will fit best, according to Duarte.

"Mia Margherita is the first of a series of restaurant concepts we're working on," he said.

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