

Restaurant Profile: **Mambo Italiano**

Payge Cox, Restaurant Profiler

Mambo Italiano opened its doors in late September at the Forum on Peachtree Parkway. You know, its the restaurant in the corner with the Vespa sitting right outside the door. I recently had a chance to catch up with **Angelo Laios** one afternoon once the lunch crowd had died down. Angelo is the owner and you can find him and his fiancée, **Nicole**, there most every day. That's because they are open every day of the week from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Okay Angelo, whats with the Vespa outside your door? A Vespa is a vehicle that looks like a cross between a motor cycle and a scooter. They are very popular in Greece and Italy. They have been a main form of transportation in Europe for a long time. He wanted something to set him apart from other restaurants and thought this might be a way to do it. Besides, Angelo loves Vespas. So, I guess you could say he is becoming a collector with one of his old favorites displayed on at the restaurant.

Angelo has an accent that compels you to listen to every word he says. Even though he is Greek, he has the accent from growing up in South Africa. He tells me

that Italian and Greek food are similar and growing up in a family of restaurateurs, he learned to cook when he was a boy. Angelo wants the public to know about his wood fired pizzas. He has a special oven designed just for baking them. He explained the process of cooking the pizza at high temperatures was to lock in the moisture.

Mambo Italiano specializes in Italian American food and the restaurant caters to large parties, offering up large farmhouse tables situated in the middle of the restaurant. Angelo plans to add a martini bar sometime in January.

Angelo is very experienced when it comes to owning restaurants; he sold his ownership in the Fishmonger not too long ago and he also currently owns Frogs in Midtown.

My husband and I went to dinner at Mambo's with our kids before Thanksgiving. My children loved the kids menu and even though Mambo's is a white tablecloth restaurant, the brown paper toppers and crayons kept us busy while we waited for our appetizers. They have daily specials and an extensive wine list. We

enjoyed the calamari and the eggplant parmesan. Service was excellent as well. We all left satisfied with leftovers to take home. On another occasion I had the ravioli special, which changes daily.

This particular ravioli was smoked chicken ravioli in a pesto cream sauce with asparagus and fresh tomatoes. It was divine. I also tried the tomato bisque and the Tuscan gorgonzola chicken salad; both dishes were also excellent. Angelo told me that the grilled Salmon salad is very popular and that the pizzas are individual and quick to serve.

Okay Angelo, one more question...where did the name Mambo Italiano come from? Angelo told me he and Nicole were listening to some old classic **Rosemary Clooney** songs and really liked that song, and so the restaurant was named.



Angelo Laios and Nicole

Mambo Italiano

The Forum Shopping Center
5165 Peachtree Pkwy,
Ste 210
Norcross, GA
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Specialties include:
Woodfired Pizza
Pastas and Gelato
NEW! Full Bar
with specialty Martinis