

Eastern European flavour abounds at MM Bake Shop



Growing up with four sisters in the Republic of Georgia, Mzia spent a lot of time in the kitchen absorbing the culinary traditions of her people while putting her own spin on time-tested recipes.

They were a family bubbling over with big ideas, and this only trebled when Mzia came to Canada.

Here, she brought her flavour vision to life at a bakery in Thornhill, and now in Aurora with MM Bakes Shop, local foodies can experience the sweet flavours of Eastern Europe with a few modern twists right at the Aurora Shopping Centre.

Mzia opened the doors of MM Bake Shop last month at the northwest corner of Yonge and Murray Drive.

Offering a wide array of sweet and savoury baked goods ? from cakes to cookies and from blintzes to quiches ? she set out on her vision to create the best possible product with the highest quality, most wholesome ingredients.

?After 16 years in Thornhill it was time to move on and start a new chapter,? she says in her bright and airy storefront. ?It took us a while, but we found Aurora and it was exactly what we wanted. It was a lot of time and a lot of work, but it all worked out and hopefully it will be even better!

?Whatever I made at home, I brought here. We have the classic Eastern European recipes we use as well, all from friends in the Ukraine, Russia and Moldova as well. We have our signature MM Cake which is half chocolate and half vanilla for people who come in and can't decide on one flavour. It's super good but simple, not too over-complicated. We keep trying to make different stuff and, with our new freezer, it's going to be full of our ideas.?

Mzia opened her Aurora bakeshop bringing most of what they used in the Thornhill area for their initial menu. In the first few weeks of being open, there were some tweaks here and there and what they offer now is a menu that is almost completely overhauled to reflect local trends, including one particular dessert that was in hot demand almost as soon as they opened: a fresh, fluffy, and fruity Pavlova.

?People have been great and so friendly,? she says. ?We asked people, ?So, what would you like to get?' and whatever they said we tried to make new stuff. When they saw our merengues everyone kept asking for Pavlova. We started with bigger cakes, but we saw people don't necessarily want a big cake but a slice of this or that. They want a variety of things, different versions of pastries and tarts, and this has been a success.

?We try to find everything that is natural and we try to get the best quality,? she adds, noting that as they use flour in their kitchen they can't say they offer truly gluten-free, but they do offer bakes with wheat flour alternatives for those who wish to avoid gluten. ?When there's something new to offer, we try it first and, if we don't like it, we don't want to sell it.

?Everything is homemade and everything is going to taste good!?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter