

Q&amp;A

# Lynora's owner plans to expand in SoFlo



Today's generation of the Abbenante family has turned recipes from grandmother Clementina and great-grandmother Lynora (the namesake) into a successful boutique brand of Italian recipes in northern Palm Beach County. Owner Angelo Abbenante is now planning on expanding into Boca Raton and Fort Lauderdale. Dangerwing Photography

BY ROD STAFFORD HAGWOOD SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL

If you love Lynora's restaurant, but hate the schlep north on I-95, then here's some good news: The Italian restaurant is coming to Boca Raton and Fort Lauderdale.

Eventually.

Angelo Abbenante, the owner of the boutique chain of restaurants, says his family expects to open in the Uptown Boca shopping/dining village sometime in September/October and at Fort Lauderdale's River Market shopping center in the Bal Harbour neighborhood around November/December (in the former space of French bakery La Boulangerie).

"Expansion to the south is something we always thought about," Abbenante explains. "We've had so many clients from the south coming up to the Clematis location."

Lynora's is best known for family recipes, handed down from matriarch to matriarch for generations culminating in the first Lynora's in Lake Worth in 1974.

Maria Abbenante still oversees the prep practices, conceptualizes updated menu items and maintains quality control, passing on the lessons she learned in her childhood on the Italian island of Ponza, cooking alongside her mother Clementina and her grandmother Lynora, the restaurant's namesake.

Maria's son, Angelo, is the one who branched the brand out in Palm Beach County:

The West Palm Beach location on Clematis Street opened in 2013.

The Jupiter at Tequesta location opened in 2016

A second West Palm Beach location on South Dixie Highway opened in 2017 as the fast-casual Lynora's Kitchen.

The Palm Beach Gardens location at Alton Plaza opened in 2019.

Here is more on the new expansion into southern Palm Beach County and Broward County in excerpts from an interview with Angelo Abbenante.

What made the timing right to start opening Lynora's restaurants toward the south?

"So, we basically opened up our fourth location in Palm Beach Gardens [in 2019]. Then along came the opportunity at this plaza in West Boca and we decided to jump on it.

Fort lauderdale was something that basically the team put together...a much smaller location. The owner of the plaza really wanted Lynora's there and gave us a great deal. It all kind of happened simultaneously. It's going to be out first location in Broward. We're very excited. Hopefully it keeps working out for us to keep expanding to the south."

What was it about these two locations that made it right for Lynora's?

"For the Boca location it kind of imitated...or...emulated our Alton location, a big plaza where there's a big grocery store and a lot of new homes behind it. West Boca is very family oriented. We feel our restaurants are family-owned and that we really cater to the families in the neighborhood. It just hit all our bullet points: lots of families; lots of schools; on a main road and a growing population.

Fort lauderdale is, again, basically a shopping center. We're [near] two very well known retailers, a Lululemon, which we are next to, and a Whole Foods. And we're also on a very busy highway, Federal Highway. Wilton Manors is a mile away."

Did the COVID-19 pandemic mess up your plans too much?

“We had signed a lease ...and...started construction in Boca during the pandemic, March or April of last year. So of course we put a stop on it. We decided to wait to see what happens. And then we obviously started back up... around the middle of January.”

Are you going to tweak those recipes for today’s tastes?

“No. Actually we haven’t touched our recipes since the ’70s. Everything has remained exactly the same. That’s one of the things that we’re really proud of, the recipes are still from my grandma and my mom. Each location has a chef...we’ve given them leeway to...create their own dishes, like with local fishes that we bring in. But our staples, the meatballs and sauces, those recipes haven’t changed since 1976.”

You also say that you aren’t ones to shy away from a party and are “ready to bring the good time.” What’s that all about?

“With most of our restaurants, we have Sunday brunch and our Sunday brunch has a live DJ at all the locations. We try to throw a party on Sunday with bottomless mimosas and Bellinis, great champagne specials. On Sunday we felt like turn it up a little bit.”

If you go

The Boca Raton location will have 150 seats, about 80 inside and about 70 outside. The address is 9560 Glades Road, Suite 180, at Uptown Boca shopping/dining center.

The Fort Lauderdale location will have 120 seats, about 40 inside and about 75 outside. The address is 2364 N. Federal Highway, at River Market shopping/dining center.

For more information, go to [Lynoras.com](http://Lynoras.com), [Instagram.com/lynorasrestaurant](https://www.instagram.com/lynorasrestaurant) or [Facebook.com/lynorasProducts](https://www.facebook.com/lynorasProducts).