

New restaurant at Yorktown Beach serves Italian staples alongside regional favorites

Duke's Italian Eatery just opened Monday, January 14, 2019 inside the Duke of York Hotel at Yorktown Beach. The hotel hadn't leased the space to a separately run restaurant in decades.



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A new restaurant is serving North Carolina cheese biscuits and Italian favorites at the Duke of York Hotel at Yorktown Beach.

Duke's Italian Eatery is open 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day for breakfast and lunch, and can deliver in Yorktown Village from 4-9 p.m., owners Joseph Gary and Brian Parker of Newport News said.

"We want it to be another local favorite," dining room manager Brittany Harris said.

The restaurant seats about 50, although most like to sit in what staff calls "the tunnel" where seats overlook the beach and York River. There is additional seating outside, too.

The 57-room hotel had been without a full-service restaurant since the fall, said general manager Vivian Harris, although locals may remember previous ones there, like Island Grille and the River Room. The restaurant will also provide room service for the motel, which has been in Yorktown since 1964.

Gary, who has been in restaurants since 1983, discovered an online ad that Duke of York wanted to lease the space to restaurant operators. That came at the right time, as a deal for Gary and Parker to open a restaurant elsewhere had fallen through, he said.

The hotel had a "restaurant for rent" sign up for a day, Brittany Harris said. Brittany Harris also works as the hotel's housekeeping supervisor and is the daughter of Vivian Harris.

"This is probably the best spot I've ever had," Gary said.

The restaurant can host banquets and private parties as well, he said.

Gary said he learned homemade Italian recipes from Sal Leonardi, who owns Anna's Italian Restaurant and Pizza on Big Bethel Road in Hampton. Anna's is also supplying Dukes' dough, Gary said. Parker wanted to include cheese biscuits because he grew up eating them near Rocky Mount, N.C.

Dukes' menu includes breakfast pizza, potato pancakes and other breakfast items along with pizza, stromboli, lasagna, sub sandwiches, salads, burgers and fries for lunch. Desserts include cannoli and zeppole, which is fried pizza dough with powdered sugar drizzled with either caramel or chocolate.

For more information about Dukes Italian Eatery at 508 Water St., call 757-898-5270 or find it on Facebook.

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