

New owners get cooking at Mom and Dad's restaurant

Written by Kate Schofield Democrat staff writer

Sep. 12, 2013 |

tallahassee.com

McLean said she is excited to see the restaurant go into safe hands. Under the ownership of Graganella, she thinks the future “will be bright” and the restaurant will “get better and better.”

Her brother, Nino Violante, said this changing of guards will keep the restaurant a staple in the community for years to come.

“I think this place will go on for another 50 years,” he said. “I will help out; I am only a telephone call away.”

The new owners are keeping the same recipes but aim to bring the restaurant into the 21st century. They are creating a website for the restaurant, as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts. Eventually, customers will be able to order their food online to pick up at the restaurant.

The couple also wants to spruce up the restaurant, which was built in 1963. They are replacing the carpets, and exchanging the wood panels on the walls for sheet rock. They will add some recipes to the menu, add to the wine list, create a kids menu, fix the outdoor fountain and upgrade the restaurant’s bathrooms.

Graganella hopes to complete it all by year’s end. If business does well enough, Graganella wants to build an outdoor deck with a bar so patrons can enjoy the weather during spring and fall.

Graganella will not be able to be at the restaurant every day, so he has hired Clayton Beaty as general manager and chef. Beaty, a Monticello native, served tables at the restaurant in his mid-20s and formed an attachment to the place. He then left to pursue a culinary degree at Keiser University. He came back to the restaurant last month to volunteer in the kitchen and help out with the masses that came to the restaurant after hearing it would close.

Beaty has spent the last three weeks learning and writing down the recipes that McLean knows by heart and in her head. He still has about two more weeks before he will be comfortable with the more than 40 recipes he is learning.

“There are different recipes for each thing, for example, there are eight recipes for the lasagna, one for the pasta, one for the sauce, etc.”

Dean McLean, the former owners’ son, will remain in the kitchen to help Beaty.

Beaty said this was his “dream job.” He wants the restaurant to remain successful.

“I remember when I worked here, we were pretty successful, and I would be happy with that,” he said.

For the new owner, making the restaurant the place to go for a special event is his ultimate goal.

“I want it to be a place someone would go to propose,” Jim Graganella said.