

Jennifer Resick Williams
Know Public Relations
814.659.3117
Jennifer@knowpr.com



CHEF MIKE ISABELLA'S GRAFFIATO RICHMOND OPENING SEPTEMBER 10

D.C. Restaurateur Renovates Historic Downtown Space for Second Location of His Italian-Inspired Restaurant

RICHMOND, VA – September 5, 2014 – Washington, D.C. restaurateur and Top Chef All-Stars Runner-Up, Mike Isabella, announces the opening of Graffiato in downtown Richmond on September 10. The Italian-inspired restaurant is located at 123 W. Broad Street in a historic building that served as a furniture showroom as far back as 1909. Isabella updated the interior of the historic building, adding a wood-burning pizza oven and pizza bar but preserving much of its historic integrity. Travis Croxton, owner of Rappahannock Oyster Co., and Hilda Staples, partner in Graffiato D.C., have partnered with Isabella on this project.

"Richmond is such an exciting place to be right now. It's an up and coming city with the makings to become a top-notch food scene," said chef/owner, Mike Isabella. "I'm thrilled to bring my take on Italian-American food to Richmond. Much like D.C., everyone from the farmers to our new restaurant and bar neighbors has been warm and welcoming. We can't wait to open and become part of the restaurant community."

Joining Isabella is chef de cuisine, Matthew Robinett, who comes to Graffiato Richmond after serving as executive chef at Petit Louis Bistro and as sous chef at Pazo Restaurant, both Foreman-Wolf restaurants, in Baltimore, MD.

The Menu

The Graffiato Richmond menu will feature many of Isabella's best-selling dishes from the D.C. restaurant, like the sweet corn agnolotti, hand-cut spaghetti, roasted cauliflower and chicken with pepperoni sauce. Dishes from the restaurant's new wood-burning oven will be featured prominently, and include roasted vegetables and meats. The menu will also reflect what is local and in-season from Shenandoah Valley and regional farms. There will also be dishes unique to Graffiato Richmond, including crispy artichoke with boquerones, capers and lemon, a dish of hearty eggplant caponata and house-made cannelloni stuffed with shrimp and scallops.

An array of artisanal, hand-crafted pizzas will also be available, including Isabella's knock-out Jersey Shore pie piled with fried calamari and cherry pepper aioli. Isabella will introduce new pizzas as well, available exclusively at the Richmond location, like the Clash of the Titans, a pie piled with clams, calamari, crab, tomato and arugula.

The beverage program will feature beer and Prosecco on tap and a wine list with both domestic and global selections, including varietals from Virginia. Taha Ismail, beverage director for all of Isabella's restaurants, will also oversee the craft cocktail program, which will include originals like the American Pride, which mixes moonshine with blackberries, lemon and mint, and the RVA Gin and Tonic, which supplements locally-crafted gin with strega and house-made tonic. Wine Director James Horn's list is inspired by the flavors of Italy and the Mediterranean. The whole list, which includes a number of local bottles in its domestic offerings, is a product of three years experience pairing wines with Isabella's refined Jersey-Italian cooking.

The Space

While Isabella borrowed design elements from Graffiato's original location, the historic Popkin Building gives the space a feel and identity all its own. The design blends Graffiato's signature graffitied industrial branding with the building's unique historic features. The 6,700 square foot space will accommodate 210 seats, including 50 on the updated mezzanine and 12 at the new pizza bar.

About Graffiato

The original Graffiato opened in the Chinatown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. in 2011. The Italian-inspired spot serves seasonal, artisanal small plates, and handmade pastas and pizzas inspired by Isabella's upbringing in a New Jersey Italian family. With heavy influence from his Latin and Mediterranean culinary training, Graffiato is anything but a traditional Italian eatery.

About Chef Mike Isabella

Mike Isabella is the chef/owner of Graffiato, Kapnos and G in Washington, D.C. In late 2014 and early 2015, he plans to open Kapnos Taverna and Pepita (respectively) in Arlington, VA. He is the author of *Mike Isabella's Crazy Good Italian*; in 2012 he was named *FOOD & WINE* magazine's The People's Best New Chef Mid-Atlantic. Before opening Graffiato, Isabella was the executive chef of José Andrés' Zaytinya. Previously, Isabella worked under Marcus Samuelsson, Jose Garces and a host of other notable chefs and restaurateurs. Outside the kitchen, Isabella appeared on Season Six of *Top Chef*, and he was the runner-up on *Top Chef All-Stars*.

Location: 123 W. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23220

Phone: 804-918-9454

Website: GraffiatoRVA.com

Hours: Bar opens at 4:30pm daily.
Sunday-Wednesday, 4:30-10pm
Thursday, 4:30-11pm
Friday-Saturday, 4:30pm-12am

Team: Chef/Owner: Mike Isabella
Chef De Cuisine: Matthew Robinett
General Manager: Tim Galvin
Bar Manager: Taha Ismail

Capacity: 230, 35 in the side mezzanine, 50 in the rear mezzanine
For private dining events, the space can accompany standing receptions of up to 50 or up to 300.

Reservations: By phone at 804-918-9454 or online at OpenTable.com

Branding: The General Design Company

Media Inquiries: Jennifer Resick Williams, Know Public Relations / Jennifer@knowpr.com / 814.659.3117

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