

# The Palm Beach Post

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## Zuccarelli's at 25

"Me and my family are here seven days a week, all year. That's how you do it," said Olympia Zuccarelli, co-owner of **Zuccarelli's** restaurant in West Palm Beach. She's talking about staying power — the restaurant has achieved the elusive 25-year mark in the same location, and with the same basic menu.

"It was basically a pizzeria when my Uncle Fiore opened," she said. "Over the years, the menu has grown; we've added more pasta specials, seafood, veal, meats, sandwiches and salads."

Her parents, Ralph and Frances Zuccarelli, took over 23 years ago. "I grew up in the restaurant, and so has my son — he's 15 now. We've seen a lot of changes, we've added numerous dishes, but the menu still has the original pizzas and pastas on it."

But tastes have changed, in both food and décor. "We revamped the dining room two years ago," she said. "We added a granite bar, with flat-screen TV and upgraded the stemware to match the new expanded wine lists, and put in stone. It needed it."

The kitchen walls were knocked out, so it's now wide open. "We let anybody who wants to come into the kitchen walk in — we're not ashamed of it; it's spotless."

To go along with new specialties such as pine nut-crusted sea bass over sautéed spinach, and pastas like the rigatoni with mushrooms

and house-made sweet or hot sausages with a pink sauce, they've added Super Tuscan red wines, California and other Italian selections. "It's a huge list now," she said. "We do wine dinners, and a lot of catering, too."

Pizza is still big, she said, but diners have moved on

from the days of baked stuffed shells, and spaghetti and meatballs — popular dishes from when they first opened. "They love the fish and veal dishes, and my mom's homemade braciola. She also makes tripe in season, and we call up the list of regulars on the Rolodex who wait for it, so they can come in."

She says they make dishes to order, as well. "That's why I'm here 24/7. We don't say 'no' to anyone. They're like family; we have a ton of regulars. We're just thankful for anyone who comes in, being in the dead corner of a shopping center."

A dessert case is also new: It features their home-made ricotta cheesecake and cannolis, as well as desserts from Sweet Endings bakery in West Palm Beach.

And, they're selling their own house-made marinara sauce. "It's only sold in the restaurant right now," she said. "But when I have time, maybe it'll be in stores."

### ► Zuccarelli's

1937 N. Military Trail, West Palm Beach  
Phone: (561) 686-7739

Open Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday till 11 p.m. and Sunday, 4-10 p.m.