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New Restaurant Brings Elegant, Delectable Lebanese Cuisine To Greenwich

Greenwich - Lebanese cuisine, in all its' delightful, authentic glory, makes a Greenwich debut on July 24th with the opening of *Myrna's Mediterranean Bistro* at 28 West Putnam Ave., 200 ft. from the top of Greenwich Ave. There will be a private, invitation only pre-party from 6-9pm on July 22 and 23 to which the press is welcome.

"Myrna's exists to introduce the Mediterranean diet to Greenwich," says owner Myrna Yanni, who, along with her partner, Pierre Lahoud, created her first dining hot spot, and loyal following, five years ago with *Myrna's Mediterranean Bistro* at 866 East Main St. in Stamford.

Lebanon has an ancient, cosmopolitan Middle Eastern culture and its cuisine is the epitome of the Mediterranean diet (recently touted as one of the world's healthiest diets.) The emphasis is on fresh vegetables, fish, lean meat and an absence of saturated fats. Indeed you won't find a stick of butter or a jar of mayonnaise anywhere near Myrna's kitchen. Instead meals are prepared with olive oil or canola oil and the help of myriad aromatic spices like fresh mint, sumac, cumin, cinnamon, oregano and allspice. The latter are used subtly, nothing overbearing.

"We're really health conscious and I care about introducing people to a less fatty and healthy cuisine," says Myrna who explains that most of her menu is high in protein and low in saturated fats making it a "South Beach Friendly" diet.

All this emphasis on health, however, does not detract from the taste. Myrna's entrees are a delicious, mouth-watering smorgasbord of Lebanese and Greek staples including chickpea based Hummus, Falafel, Taboule salad and charcoal-grilled Kebabs, Baba Ghannouj, lamb and beef sausages and Spanikopita (spinach pie) to name a few, with each dish offering zesty, delicious flavors and tastes. The restaurant is heaven for vegetarians with its wide selection of Pita wraps and entrees.

"The ingredients we use in our salads (Taboule, Fattoosh or Mediterranean) is all based on herbs," says Myrna who uses fresh lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, fresh mint, parsley and sumac in place of Caesar dressing and Blue cheese (carbs, animal fats) for flavor.

There is also less well-known fare such as Kibbe, a scrumptious traditional dish from Lebanon made with lean ground beef mixed with Bulgur wheat, stuffed with seasoned beef tips, sautéed onions and pine nuts. Also available are a wide selection of seafood dishes; Red Snapper, Sea Bass, grilled Prawn, Salmon and of course, Red Mullet, a native Mediterranean fish that comprises an outstanding dish common in Lebanon.

All the food at the restaurant is prepared fresh daily with many of the ubiquitous items; Hummus, Tzatziki (yogurt), Tahini (sesame paste) and their award winning Grape Leaves prepared from scratch. The meat is grilled on the spot, with nothing pre-made or left sitting out on display. Myrna also strongly believes in accommodating individual tastes and needs. While Lebanese food is certainly not overbearing, those who want can get the simplest, freshest salads and wraps, sans spices, or dishes made to order.

According to Myrna the typical responses from people who try her food for the first time are, "Wow!' and," "It's delicious!" or, "It's so fresh."

Both of Myrna's chefs are Lebanese and hail from two of New York City's finest restaurants.

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As the only authentic Lebanese restaurant in Fairfield County, Myrna's Zagat-rated Stamford site has garnered numerous awards and accolades. In 2007 and 2008 Myrna's was recognized at 'The Taste of Stamford' where they won *Best Tasting*, the top award at the event. In 2008 Myrna's Bistro won '*Best Greek Mediterranean restaurant in Fairfield County.*' They have been featured in The New York Times, Stamford Advocate, Greenwich Times, Fairfield County Weekly and on-line at Culinarymenus.com.

Myrna spent part of her childhood in Lebanon before coming to Greenwich for high school. It was from her Lebanese mother that she learned to love the home made Lebanese cooking that she now shares at her restaurant.

The new Greenwich locale boasts a beautifully painted Mediterranean style décor and wine bar and can seat over 50. It will be open for meals 7 days a week after Labor Day. Lunch is casual with fine dining for dinner. Take-out, catering and delivery, for home or corporate events, are also available and Thursday to Saturday the restaurant will be open late with live entertainment and traditional belly dancing shows.

Myrna's impeccable, friendly staff will work hard to make sure your dinner and dining experience fulfills all your expectations.