

BBG deepens cuisine lineage, retains Banushi legacy

By Tristan McGough
Special to the Lakes Edition

The new owners of Banushi's Bar & Grill are committed to keeping BBG's entire menu, knowing a good thing when they see it ... and taste it.

Wendy Brigham-Abrouq, PMP, Co-Owner and General Manager at the newly purchased BBG rhetorically asks, smiling, "Why change a tried and true formula?"

Her co-owning husband, KaRim Abrouq, emphasizes, "By keeping the Banushi name we want patrons to know we are carrying on the full menu that they developed over the last six years. Same identity; same menu."

Perhaps the unique circumstances of that six year anniversary was a harbinger of cuisine continuity, for that was the very day that KaRim Abrouq, his wife, and Loc and David Pham purchased Banushi's Bar & Grill, located at 800 Nygaard St. in Stoughton.

With highly acclaimed food and spirit establish-

ments in both Janesville and Edgerton, brothers Ilim and Urim Banushi have proven their expertise in cultivating a tasty choice of food items plus a wide variety of craft beers and diverse cocktails. Their finely honed recipes and spirit selections will remain a legacy at BBG.

KaRim testifies, "Both Ilim and Urim have been fantastic in this transition. And they mentored us in how to achieve the results they've come to be known for. We will carry all that on, the entire menu; we want people to rest assured."

"However," Wendy again smiles, this time a bit more wryly, "that doesn't mean we won't add anything new!"

"Like the Pham family's Vietnamese recipe for egg rolls!" KaRim piggy-backs.

David and Loc light up. They are the sons of Phuc and Binh Pham, owners and operators of well-known Binh's Tailoring in Madison, with both east and west locations

and which is a successful family business that got its start almost 30 years ago in a small town of Nam Dinh in Vietnam.

"We tried the egg rolls out here," David affirms, "on a trial basis."

"That's right," KaRim interjects, "we cut them in half and I passed them out at the bar."

He goes on to recount an amusing anecdote where a particularly short, but insistent elderly woman got a sample, then proceeded to follow KaRim about the bar area as he passed out free testers to other patrons, soliciting their feedback.

She was more than ready to give hers, KaRim recalls, "Put this on your menu!" she demanded. She wouldn't leave him alone that night until she had gotten his pledge to do so.

"We have it on our menu right now," Loc affirms, "and they are a hit!" He pauses only a moment to recommend, "You must try them!"

Without letting the cat too far out of the bag, I



Banushi's Bar & Grill is located at 800 Nygaard St. in Stoughton. (Photo submitted by Tristan McGough)

have to say I understand why that little ol' lady followed KaRim around, looking for the other half of her sample.

David said, "Wendy's family recipe for Clam Chowder is on the menu, too."

First offered on a trial basis at Sunday morning brunches, inaugurated just this past Mother's Day, the traditional New England-style chowder was an instant taste success. So, too were the au-

thentic street tacos that BBG now regularly offers, right along with custom-made Margaritas. And, soon, the group revealed, Moroccan born KaRim will be sharing his family's multigenerational shish kabob recipe.

"It's incredible!" Loc enthuses, "So delicious!" KaRim chimes in, "That's the thing about all our new entrees: they have to be the best and they have to be something new. We're not going to offer what's already out there."

He takes a second to capture an idea, then says, "Anything we serve has to have a universal appeal. Virtually everyone who tries them likes them."

Under other circumstances I might have taken issue, just on reporter's principle; but I'd had the egg rolls!

David tries to clarify, "The egg rolls around this area pretty much taste the same."

"Too much cabbage," Loc larks and both brothers laugh. Wendy and KaRim can't resist the ostensible truth being expressed in the raw, as it were, and playfully concur.

Nevertheless, the quartet's guarded introduction of new recipes is not meant to usurp the Banushi legacy. Rather, all four co-owners of BBG see themselves as good stewards of the menu and the founding recipes on which the bar and grill became so successful.

"We want to carry on the legacy," KaRim attests, "but spice it up with our own lineage dishes."

It would appear that what the new BBG is offering is the best of both culinary worlds.

BBG's business complementarity and multicultural cuisine

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The extraordinary ease by which KaRim Abrouq, Wendy Brigham-Abrouq, Loc Pham and David Pham exchange ideas and complete each other's sentences exhibits the depth of the interpersonal rapport they've established over the

years. They've known each other for close to a dozen years now.

"Well," Loc shakes his head, heavy in mock seriousness, "when you put it that way, it's been a very long time!"

The other three good-naturedly guffaw at Loc's familiar antics, everyone comfortable in sharing

jokes as well as a core set of values and past episodes together. Their ongoing association in commercial ventures and, particularly, domicile-centric good-times have made them into a melded family, woven with the warp of mutual affection and woof of sumptuous victuals.

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