



Changes ahead for popular restaurant

By Joss Woolf

Nestled in the heart of East Finchley's 'old village' in Church Lane sits the ever-popular La Rugoletta restaurant which has been serving authentic Italian dishes for well over a decade. Some would say it is East Finchley's best kept secret!

Marina and David have worked tirelessly at the restaurant for the last ten years and, since they took it over four years ago, have succeeded not only in maintaining the original spirit of the restaurant but have also made it their own.

However, there will be one significant change; from early this month La Rugoletta will become Il Piccolo Villaggio (The Little Village). Marina and David say they chose the new name to reflect East Finchley's close family atmosphere, such as you would find in any small village.

Their popular menu will not change but there will be one or two additions in response to customer requests. A new website is also under way where

customers will be able to browse the menu, make reservations and subscribe to news.

In the meantime, if you want to order some food, con-

tact Il Piccolo Villaggio on 020 8815 1743 or by email, at marina@ilpiccolovillaggio.co.uk and ilpiccolovillaggiolondon@gmail.com.

Il Piccolo Villaggio



Little Village: David and Marina outside their newly named restaurant. Photo Joss Woolf

Travellers set up camp on Muswell Hill Playing Fields

By Janet Maitland

A group of travellers set up an encampment of about a dozen caravans on Muswell Hill Playing Fields behind Coldfall Wood towards the end of May and stayed for two weeks. Haringey Council, who own the land, did not begin proceedings to repossess it because of the Covid-19 outbreak. In the event, the travellers left unexpectedly of their own accord.

A spokesman for the council told *The Archer*: "The general approach was that we should not be moving travellers on during the outbreak, and any action would only have been taken after welfare

checks had been carried out to assess any vulnerabilities. "Most courts are closed so any hearing would have taken weeks to start. In line with government advice, we provided a portaloos and a water supply."

The council and local police informed us that there were some allegations from local residents of fly-tipping, bonfires, noise, a disbanded caravan and threatening behaviour from youths from the encampment towards other youths visiting the park.

A police officer from Fortis Green Safer Neighbourhood Team tweeted on the day the travellers left: "Maybe it was our visits over the last three days that made them decide to leave."

Sites and the law

In 1994 the government removed local councils' duty to create places for travellers to stay. Since then many council sites have closed and no new sites have been built for 20 years.

All land repossessions were suspended at the end of March because of the pandemic. A month later, the courts realised that an unintended consequence was that trespassers could not be evicted, so they clarified that the suspension didn't apply to them. However, any proceedings undertaken by Haringey Council would have had to be heard by Central London County court, where there is backlog of cases.

Hairdressers get their scissors ready again

By Diana Cormack

One of the most popular subjects in the media in recent months has been the state of our hair. With so many articles about how or if we should cut it, colour it or leave it, our lack of hairdressing seemed to rank with our lack of dentistry (unless of course you had problems with your teeth).

Dentists are now open for business, but the possible date for barbers and hairdressers to start snipping is Saturday 4 July. Before that they will have to prepare their premises in line with precautionary measures and strict hygiene rules which have to be adhered to.

The new salon style

At the time of writing, the shutters were still down on many of East Finchley's hairdressing businesses, but Yasmin Hussein of Hair 202 in the High Road was able to give *The Archer* some idea of what preparations were being made.

With social distance being of the essence, the number

of chairs in the salon has to be reduced, with screening where necessary. There will be fewer stylists per day, working along with a receptionist plus someone to continually do the required cleaning.

Staff will wear face visors and masks, with hand gel and wipes readily available. Face protection for clients, use of toilet facilities, and provision of beverages have to be taken into account but, until the necessary measures are put into action, it is all a learning curve.

One thing is for sure, once the salons open there will be a long wait for appointments and individual sessions will take longer too.

Neighbourly spirit fires up new magazine

By David Gritten

Growing up in East Finchley, Nicola Harrison loved the friendliness and neighbourly spirit in the area. Now, having moved north to Finchley Central, she has launched a new magazine there, partly inspired, as she says, "by the community buzz in N2".

The start-up issue of *Finchley Community Magazine* was published in mid-May and it will appear every other month. "At the moment, it's online only," Nicola explains. "Coronavirus forced that decision on us, but from September it'll be in print as well. We very much want both because that will attract a wider range of readers."

Highlights of the first issue included a feature on Stephens House and its gardens

in East End Road, N3, and a touching memoir of legendary *Goon Show* star Spike Milligan, who lived in the area, written by his daughter Jane.

With Nicola in charge, it's a handsome looking issue which has been designed by her husband Richard Cooke, who is art director of *Reader's Digest* magazine. Nicola herself has a design background, having worked for 17 years at Penguin Books. The editorial team is rounded out by sub-

editor Diane Langleben, who reads every word and makes cuts where necessary.

"It's a free magazine," Nicola, and all our space for articles is completely free. But we do rely on advertising to help cover the cost of print."

She is already planning for its November and January issues, and stresses the magazine will remain focussed on community issues: "We're based in N3 but we're open to stories in N2 as well."



Ready to read: Nicola's magazine

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