



Restaurant owner steps back saying 'Dining is changing'

By John Lawrence

Owner and chef Aki Toumazos is closing High Road restaurant Genzos this month and stepping back after more than 40 years in the trade, saying eating habits are changing and it's time to hand on to a hungry new generation. Aki and his wife Maria have run Genzos under its various guises since 2007, frequently relaunching it under a new name and with a new menu to keep the business fresh and match the chefs who became available. Their last day in the kitchen will be Sunday 21 December. "I'd like to thank all the customers I've had over the years. Many have been loyal since the day we opened and a lot have become good friends," said Aki. He'd originally planned to sell

all his fixtures and fittings and put the restaurant premises on the market but, following a last-minute offer, will instead keep an interest in a new Vietnamese street food venture to be opened by two young restaurateurs where Genzos is now. Aki, 66, says it's the right time for him to hand over: "Dining habits are changing. You can be a top-quality restaurant charging £100 a head and upwards, or you can focus on faster turnover street food and small plates. The middle ground is much harder to make work. "People don't want to sit down for a starter, main course and dessert so much these days. They prefer to share dishes and have food arrive at the table as and when it's ready. Even in central London, this is how many places operate.

"Eating out has got more expensive so I understand why people prefer to eat out in this way. But it means you need to have a different kind of kitchen operation to make it successful financially." The restaurant trade has been in Aki's blood from age seven when he used to take sandwiches to customers sitting in his father's Arnos Café in Bowes Road, Arnos Grove, and he went on to open a restaurant for himself in Cyprus when he was 25. He plans to spend more time with his three grandchildren and maybe even take the occasional golfing holiday but he won't be away from East Finchley for long. "I've still got plenty of energy and I'm sure I'll help out by being on the serving staff at the new place. I'll just make sure I stay out of the kitchen."



Handing on: Aki Toumazos is giving up the running of his restaurant Genzos after 18 years. Photo John Lawrence

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

**10 years ago:
December 2015**

The Archer reported the demolition of the Esso Garage on the corner where Church Lane meets the High Road. It took a few days to fully remove the forecourt and shop, but it was unclear how long it would take to deal with the underground fuel tanks. It was generally assumed that the garage would be replaced by flats but, a decade later, the site is still vacant and has become a local eyesore.

**15 years ago:
December 2010**

Peter Bayley, projectionist at the Phoenix Cinema for 50 years, finally retired. He joined what was then the Rex in 1960, having previously worked at the Gaumont in North Finchley, situated where the Artsdepot now stands. Awarded an MBE in 2002, Peter said some of the most important changes he had seen in his working life were the introduction of Cinemascope in the 1950s and the more recent digitisation of film.

**25 years ago:
December 2000**

The installation of new ticket machines at East Finchley station caused rush hour chaos for several days, with long queues forming at both the machines and the ticket windows. When interviewed, the station supervisor admitted that staff had been given no training on the new machines. They had yet to work out how to obtain some tickets, so were of limited help to customers, making the situation even worse.

Mother-and-son team open skincare clinic

By Karly Benson

A new skincare business opened in the High Road, N2, last month. Owner Badia Bassou, who lives just minutes away, drew on 26 years of international experience in anatomy, physiology, laser treatments, and hospitality to open her first clinic.

After acquiring the former loans office in July, the building underwent an extensive yet swift remodel. Previously a branch of Santander bank, complete with a basement safe, the space has been transformed into Ayadi Clinic offering a variety of treatments.

Badia employed her son Youness to lead the interior design, tasking him with converting an open-concept space into a functional clinic. He said the project came with many practical challenges, including flooring, plumbing, and building a foyer from scratch.

The greatest challenge, however, was securing a laser licence, a process particularly difficult in Barnet. After multiple approvals, checks, and certification submissions, the clinic is now cleared to accept clients.

Among the clinic's offerings, including laser hair removal,

Emsculpt body contouring, and medical-grade facials, the most distinctive is the GeneoX facial. With only a handful of GeneoX technologies available in the UK, the clinic hopes the hydrating, radio-frequency-based treatment will attract clients from across London.

Like all of the clinic's treatments, the GeneoX facial is non-invasive and pain-free. "I'm not for painful treatments," said Badia. "You don't need surgeries or long recoveries to see results."

In the coming weeks, the clinic will also introduce a new Italian laser, expanding its services to treat hyperhidrosis, vascular lesions, and tattoo removals. "I didn't want to give the community a boring laser clinic," Badia said, adding that she aims to broaden treatment options in north London while keeping a focus on personal care.



Skin care: Badia Bassou and her son Youness are open for business. Photo Mike Coles

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Treatment centre: The new clinic on the High Road