



Raffaella Rose Restaurant at Cortez – Hot Springs Village

Description

The **Raffaella Rose at Cortez** is an Italian fusion restaurant snuggled among the scenic hills and hollows inside the gates of lovely Hot Springs Village, Arkansas.

Raffaella Rose, while located a little off the beaten track in the Village, is well worth a short drive to investigate. The address is 299 Cortez Road, located on the magnificent Hot Springs Village Cortez Golf Course, adjacent to the Pro Shop. While this location might be a mile or two out of your way, it is well worth the little extra traveling time along the picturesque roads. Once you eat at Raffaella Rose, you are certain to return.

Raffaella Rose is a hands-on, owner-operated venue that offers a delicious dining experience in a casual atmosphere. Carl and Iva Duncan have operated at this location since 2017 and the restaurant's 5th year anniversary is coming up on February 2, 2022.

In the Beginning

"I worked for Carl and our relationship just sparked. After being married to him and being the last of nine kids, I guess the good Lord needed me to have a strong husband. Carl always tells everyone that he had to raise me," Iva laughingly expressed. Continuing, Iva said, "Carl taught me how to be a businesswoman. Together we have taught many employees how to cook, clean, inventory, order food, budget, etc."

Iva stated, "my husband, Carl Duncan, is an expert in the hospitality industry. He has been in the big chain-full service hotel industry, including Marriot, Ramada Inns, and The Austin Hotel. Carl has taught me everything I know about the industry. We have worked on and off together for 34 years." When working in the hospitality industry, Carl was promoted to Regional Manager.

Carl attended the University of Alabama, with a major in accounting. Iva said, he's amazing with math and figures but he was drafted into military service and had to leave school.

Many years ago, Carl lived in Chicago. The mafia wanted him to be their bookkeeper. He enlisted his

father's aid to get out of there.

When asked what prompted the couple to open Raffaella Rose, Iva responded, "we were asked by a good friend to apply for it. Carl was retired and the company I worked for sold. We have always thought of owning a restaurant in order to train and help teach a trade to those we hired."

The Duncans previously ran Raffaella Rose at The 19th hole from 2005 to 2008. Lagenna Anderson, who is their current manager, also worked for the couple then. Angela Shipman has been with the Duncans since February 17, 2017, and is another loyal employee. Edna Widger, also a long-time employee is the 70-years-young breakfast cook who moves around the kitchen like she is 30. Many of the older HSV generations are acquainted with Edna.

During the same time period when they were located at the 19th Hole, they also operated the Balboa location for about six months but had various operational issues and had to give it up.

Why the Name, "Raffaella Rose"?

The restaurant was named after Iva's mother, Raffaella Rose Baedaro. Raffaella is Italian for "God Heals." That is why you will always see Raphael with wheat, fish, or fruit. When Iva was younger she always wanted to bottle her mother's spaghetti sauce or have a restaurant named after her. Iva said, "she was the one that taught me how to prepare meals and desserts for lots of people. There were nine children and many grandchildren, aunts and uncles, and cousins that would visit on Sundays and holidays to have an Italian dinner at my mom and dad's house. Friends too."

Angels at Raffaella Rose

Iva said that angels were a frequent discussion topic in her girlhood home. This is why angels are a prominent feature in the Raffaella Rose decor with many angelic paintings lining the walls and beautiful angel figurines displayed. Over the years, many customers have gifted angelic art to the Duncans. Iva loves to display the angel gifts that their loyal customers give to them. "I'm quite fond of God's Holy messengers," explained Iva.

What the Duncans Love About Operating Raffaella Rose



Carl and Iva love to see people enjoy a friendly and casual atmosphere where great food is served. Iva explained, “I love to feed people. I get more joy out the customers leaving satisfied and full than eating it myself.”

Variety of Menu Items Offered

A wide variety of food is offered at Raffaella Rose for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. This includes but is not limited to breakfast items, club sandwiches, pasta, seafood, steaks, and pork. Typical American fare such as hamburgers and french fries or onion rings are also on the menu. Patrons may dine inside or on the beautiful patio which has a fantastic view of the Cortez Golf Course.

On Monday through Saturday, a special sandwich and also a dinner special is offered.

- Sunday is menu night or chef’s choice.
- On Mondays, the special is “All You Can Eat Spaghetti”.
- Tuesdays, their delicious pot roast is featured.
- Wednesday offers a homemade style meatloaf.
- On Thursday a hand-cut pork loin marinated in a paprika brown sauce is on the menu.

Most food is scratch-prepared. Iva says, “that’s why it takes a few minutes or more to get your food. Anything good is worth the wait.”

Raffaella Rose Menu

[Raffaella-Rose-Menu-revised9221](#)

What Sets Raffaella Rose Apart from the Competition

“I think we are unique in our atmosphere. We are in the process of painting the tops of tables with beautiful paintings. (I wish I could get some of the village artists to come to make their mark.) We plan to have chalkboards available for those who want to draw while they wait,” explained Iva.

The Duncans are working with a food manufacturer to bottle a new homemade wine and cheese dressing. Iva stated, “we also have another new one called sparkling honey chill. It’s really good.”

Currently the Biggest Challenges in Owning a Business

The Duncans stated that they have a good crew with several employees who have been with them for a long time. Iva expressed, “it’s just that one extra cook and server that is the hardest to keep. The restaurant business is not for the light-hearted. There is more involved than serving food. There is a great deal of prep, stocking, cleaning, setting up, that goes on behind the scenes. Trying to get food out in a matter of minutes is pretty stressful. COVID has not really affected us too terribly badly. But we have had our ups and downs. We all just need to remember to have mercy and grace, patience and kindness for one another. No one is perfect, we all have off days. We who are working in this pandemic are trying to work and take care of our families.”

Day and Hours of Operation

Monday 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Tuesday 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Wednesday 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Thursday 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Friday 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Breakfast is served from 9-11 a.m. Both lunch and dinner are offered from 11:00 a.m. until close.

Other Details

Raffaella Rose has a full-service bar and is wheelchair accessible. Reservations are welcome and preferred for parties of five or more. Walk-ins are always welcome. Take-out is offered for those desiring at-home dining.

For all inquiries and reservations, please call (501) 915-0855.

Iva Quotes

Iva says, “Trust the Lord with everything you are and have. For He promises to provide. Keep your heart right and do the right thing towards others as you would have them do for you. If you feel mistreated, forgive, let it go like a butterfly in the wind, for your healing. God’s ways are perfect.”

When asked, “what is your motivation to keep going every day?”, Iva responded, “Yehovah God, YA, Yahweh, I AM, Jehovah, Papa God is what I like to call him or Lord. He is my motivation for everything. And I truly love my employees, and they motivate me, along with our customers who support us. I meet the best and talented people – funny people, people who need prayer. I met a new resident the other night who was a painter and she painted like Michael Angelo. The other night we had a movie producer, who just moved to the village, come in. We have not become rich in the way of money or material things, but we have become rich in the unique people we meet every day.”

“We have also prayed for a few and we have seen their healing. We know we have Angels all around the restaurant. I actually took a picture of one looking in the window one night. Customers tell us they can feel the peace when they come in. We consider ourselves a faith-based restaurant. With that being said, we have our ups and downs. Christians are far from perfect but are often scrutinized for the worst. But with God, he always repairs the differences.”

The Duncans Appreciate their Customers

“We just want to say thank you to all of HSV and the surrounding area along with the POA. Thank you for the opportunity to share our talents and our ministry to help others learn a trade. We have not become rich by any means in this restaurant. But we love what we do. It’s what the Lord spoke over us years ago, that we were ministers of hospitality.”

By Cheryl and Joe Dowden, January 17, 2022

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The table art in the above photographs is by Iva Duncan.

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Author

lynn

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