

Monday, February 1, 2021
By: Rebecca King

What to expect from the new, larger Lorena's in Maplewood



Video: Humberto Campos of Restaurant Lorena's

Chef Humberto Campos talks about the inspiration behind Restaurant Lorena's in Maplewood, NJ. *Danielle Parhizkaran/Northjersey.com*

Lorena's, a beloved fine French restaurant in Maplewood, has moved down the street to a larger location.

Not only is the restaurant bigger than its previous 1,400-square-foot, 46-seat spot, but the new Lorena's offers a laid back dining room for more casual eats along with, of course, its to-be-expected elegant white tablecloth space — and, brand new cocktails, wine and beer.

Currently, the high-end restaurant is offering takeout only at its new location at 160 Maplewood Ave., but in late February, it is scheduled to open for indoor dining, according to chef Humberto Campos, who owns the restaurant with his wife, Lorena.



Chef Humberto Campo of Lorena's Restaurant in Maplewood. *Chris Pedota, NorthJersey.com-USA Today Network*

For the past 15 years, Lorena's had been serving delicious French fare in two intimate dining rooms (one 20-seat, the other 26-seat) at 168 Maplewood Ave. The BYOB offered classic bread service, fine stemware and decanters, lush butter made in Vermont and tables draped in crisp white tablecloths. That location is now closed.

"We've always considered a potential move, but things haven't worked out until now," said Campos.

The new location is 4,500 square feet and seats about 130. It has been renovated to suit the warm aesthetic Lorena's customers have come to love, hiding exposed concrete and steel with wallpaper, carpet, drapes, a newly installed fireplace and other design touches to make it more welcoming.

"The old space was like eating in someone's home," said Campos. "It was cozy."

But lovers of fine dining, fear not. The back of the restaurant will have a separate room with white tablecloths, multi-course meals and a chef's table.

"Lorena's has always been known for tablecloth service," said Campos. "We're going to keep that."

Why add on a more casual component?



Venison Sirloin served at Lorena's Restaurant in Maplewood. *Chris Pedota, NorthJersey.com-USA Today Network*

“COVID kind of forced us to change our concept,” said Campos. Catering to folks who were craving comfort food to take home, he found himself cooking more chicken, green beans and potatoes than ever before. He changed the menu, offering less refined, more accessible food for takeout at more affordable prices.

“Once we open indoor dining, we’ll have our butter lobster and foie gras again,” said Campos. “But casual is how the industry is headed because of COVID, and it allowed me to experiment more with comfort food.”

You can expect both when Lorena's reopens for dine-in in February.

“We’re thrilled to be able to stay in Maplewood,” said Campos. “We’ll have more options at the restaurant than we were able to have before.”

Lorena's is located at 160 Maplewood Ave., Maplewood; 973-763-4460, restaurantlorena.com.



Takeout is available at Lorena's, though indoor dining won't open until spring. *Courtesy Of Lorena's*