

Cinque Terre WEST

By **Magnolia Lafleur** - May 26, 2022



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Espresso and Cheesecake

the form of a small, quaint and intimate spot, Cinque Terre WEST is the perfect place.

Family run by Gianbattista “Gianba” Vinzoni—acting chef—and his wife, Marlo, Cinque Terre WEST opened in Pacific Palisades in 2019. Born and raised outside of Monterosso, Italy—one of the five villages in Cinque Terre—in a small town called Bonassola, Gianba said he named the restaurant after the place he was born and its surrounding areas.

The couple truly aims to bring the taste of Italy to the establishment: Every single food item is made in-house, and holds the texture and taste of an Italian, home-cooked meal in each bite.

Gianba started off our meal by serving the *Burrata*. If you’re craving something light, fluffy and cooling, the *Burrata*—a slow cooked, cluster tomato with watercress and saba—is a great starting point. It is a soft and supple entrance into a warm entree.

We moved on to the *Polpo Arrosto* (Italian for “roasted octopus”), an octopus appetizer complemented by fennel, charred lemon and salsa cruda, which offers seafood lovers a flavorful and delicious bite.

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little taste of Italy in

One of the main entrees I tried was the *Agnolotti di Granoturco*—a corn and ricotta stuffed ravioli with a lemon butter sauce. It was a delectable meal that transported my taste buds all the way to Italy. With the pasta freshly made, and many of the ingredients coming straight from Italy, this dish leaves one wanting more, with each bite holding a fresh taste that grows in desirability.

For my second entree, the *Buridda*, a traditional Ligurian seafood soup, was paired with a side of warm bread. The best word to describe it? Healing. The broth was body restoring, invigorating the senses with its savory taste, jam packed with fresh seafood that quenched the desire for anything other than another bowl.

For an Italian made pizza with a kick, the *Porchetta Stracchino e salsa verde* offers slow-roasted pork belly with soft Ligurian cheese and a crust just as tasty as the sauce. With everything made from scratch, this dish is another gateway into the heart of Italian pizza.

For dessert, *Cheesecake* was a sweet finish with a perfectly small portion, adorned with berries and accompanied by an *Espresso*, ending the meal on a strong and soft note.

Specializing in fresh seafood and ingredients—some of which are imported straight from Italy—Cinque Terre WEST's house-made pastas are best paired with its selection of Italian wine. From the 2018 Sauvignon Blanc to the 2017 Pigato Colle dei Bardellini, guests are also invited to partake in the establishment's private wine club that offers the community a space to participate in trying a variety of wine and conversation: Cinque Terre WEST's Enoteca 5 Wine membership.

Enoteca 5 is a wine bar owned and operated by the Vinzonis that was opened in the suite next door to Cinque Terre WEST in spring 2021. The space includes a bar with seating for eight, several small tables both indoors and outdoors, and a selection of more than 100 varieties of Italian and Californian wine.

“Wine Membership is a win-win,” Marlo explained. “Our members often tell me being a member brings the community together. People connecting and having a great time. Our events always have something different to offer. Different wines and bites. Chef Gianba prepares bites with every tasting. We have some fun events lined up.”

On June 8, Enoteca will host a Ceviche Night from 4:30 to 7 p.m., offering a variety of selections like shrimp, lobster and octopus, and scallop. A Brassfield Estate Winery tasting is slated to take place June 15.

“What’s great about Cinque Terre WEST is that we are very personal with our restaurant goers,” Marlo shared with the *Palisadian-Post*. “This is the place where everybody knows your name. I know everyone that comes here and care about everyone, we’re neighbors and it makes for a more intimate dining experience. There’s a value in making and serving food for people you know and care about.”

After having to focus largely on take-out orders for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Marlo shared that everyone at the restaurant is pleased to offer the neighborhood an exceptional and intimate dine-in experience once again.

“It is wonderful to see people’s smiling faces, and giving and receiving hugs,” Marlo said. “Seeing people I haven’t seen in a long time.”

Cinque Terre WEST is a true gem that offers a family-friendly atmosphere and intimate space for Palisadians to build their relationship with each other, while filling their belly with tasty and authentic Italian cuisine.