



# Gabrizio

CLASSIC ITALIAN FARE  
BEING SERVED UP IN  
DOWNTOWN NILES

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Photos and Story by Phil Eich,  
Storyville Social, as part of the  
Michigan Main Street Story  
Series

“We were living in Las Vegas, working for the MGM Grand and running two stores, when my husband got a job in the area. He moved here but I stayed behind to continue running the stores while we got things situated. It was a lot of flying back and forth.

During one of my visits, I remember my husband brought me here to Niles. It was Christmas time and everything was white. I stepped out of the car and felt goosebumps. We were walking down the hill on Main Street and I said, ‘Wow, this place is so enchanting. It’s so cute.’ I got a different vibe here versus other places I saw.

Finally, two years later, I sold my stores and came here full time.

My husband and I are Italian—we love espresso. Since we were new to the area, we would go around in the morning to find a nice coffee shop.

But we couldn’t find one.

We sat down and started talking, and little by little, ideas would come. On top of that, there were empty buildings and spaces so we saw an opportunity. We decided it was time for a new store. We combined the names of our children, Gabriella and Fabrizio, and called it ‘Gabrizio’.

Niles was the community where I felt that vibe. I go by vibes and I just really felt it here. I love it. I love the town, and that's when we decided we wanted our coffee shop here.

After that, we started the process. We met Lisa, the DDA and Main Street Director, and began looking for a space.

One day, she called us and said, 'Listen, I have a couple here; they own a building. It's called the Grand LV. They're looking for somebody and they have an open space.'

Remember that my husband and I worked at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, and the first thing we saw was the name of the building: Grand LV. We were like, "Oh my God, 'Grand LV'! MGM Grand! Las Vegas! This is it!"

My background is actually European. My family is from Italy, Spain and France. So, even though I was born in Caracas, Venezuela, my grandfathers are from Spain and my other part of the family is from Italy. I always saw my grandmothers, my nonas, cooking and my mom cooking and baking, so it was in me at a very early age. I started developing my skills in the kitchen and getting a sense of the aromas.

I ended up going to school for fashion design and then in the middle of fashion design, I wanted to go to culinary school. I looked at both fashion and food and saw how they matched well together—in both, you're creating something, going for details, you are aiming for the best quality you can. All of that comes together in both.

The Grabrizio coffee program is a very European style. It is a very smooth bean, medium-roast coffee. We wanted to offer the customers that nice smooth flavor on the coffee that doesn't have to be covered with a ton of syrup and milk. Personally, I'm a black coffee person. I love to have that cup of coffee that is not going to hit me on my head with the roast, something super dark. I don't use milk or syrup.

My other big thing is to make everything from scratch. I'm the type of person that I love to go to the markets and see what local options are available with fruits and even nuts. I like roasting nuts and any type of vegetables that we can to create savory things and I like to make everything by hand.

Besides our breakfast pastries and coffee, we also do custom and specialty cakes, and our cookie program is one of the things that makes customers say 'wow', too. We have sandwiches that change every three to six months. I don't like to go with the same thing over and over again, unless I know there are items that customers



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just need to have every morning!

I like to rotate things. I need to give customers different ways to learn about how you can mix savory with sweet. Right now, we have our apple bistro made with puff pastry. The inside is not just apple, cinnamon and sugar. They have mustard seeds and they have a little bit of chili peppers, too. It's not going to kick you, but it has that little touch of something different. I like to do something different and I like to give my customers that experience of tasting different flavors.

We are very blessed to be here in Niles and this community is awesome. It's great. One of the things my husband and I wanted to create here was not just a store where you're just a customer. We want people to know that they are like family or friends to us. When you come in, we are going to treat you like we've known you forever. We want people to come in and enjoy their breakfast and have a good time here. We want you to forget about the world. The community has given us some amazing feedback and it's nice to see your customers saying they liked their meal.

Our customers aren't numbers to us, they're part of us. What I do, I do it with love and I want to share it with them. I want them to know that someone took the time to create something, just for them."

—Desyree Alberganti, Gabrizio, Niles, Michigan



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