



OGGI *Italian*

OGGI Italian is the “second act” in more ways than one. It is the second round of ownership of the restaurant that was first opened by Joe DiBartolo in 2016. The new owners as of December 2018 are husband and wife team Joe Saker and Deb Ogston. For Deb, who had spent 25 years working in human resources, this is her self-proclaimed “second act.” Joe calls it his “prelude to retirement.” Whatever they call it, OGGI keeps them very busy and their patrons very happy.

Joe’s work experience has included everything from military to teaching/coaching to stay-at-home dad and more. Both Deb and Joe have traveled, worked and lived abroad throughout the years. When being a corporate executive was no longer fun for Deb and their daughter was about to graduate from high school, they decided it was time to find a business that they could enjoy and work on together.

They researched lots of different types of businesses, looking for one they could be passionate about while enjoying a different lifestyle. Joe explained that their escape from stress had always been cooking. They enjoyed finding a new recipe, going to the market, buying cooking tools and quality ingredients, then cooking together. They have a true passion for the entire process and they love to share the delicious results with others. They decided that owning a restaurant was going to fit them well.

While their daughter headed to college in NYC, Deb and Joe chose to move to Davis Islands, from Minnesota, and purchase OGGI. It was their pick because they wanted an already established restaurant that they could take over and “hopefully not mess it up.”

In the months since, Joe and Deb have ignored vendors and others who have suggested cost-cutting measures that would also affect the quality of the food. Instead, they have been listening to customers and slowly making some requested changes: added better air-conditioning and fans, daily specials to the menu and a slightly larger wine selection, to name a few. A new website is under construction. Maybe one of the best additions is delivery service to island residents only. Why only on the island, you ask? Because the delivery driver will be bringing your orders to you via a golf cart, of course.

Deb and Joe have also taken over Uncle Giuseppe’s Market, though that was not in the original plan. Joe says the business was somewhat confusing as to whether it was a pizza place, a market or a deli. That will continue to evolve. Can’t wait to see a future version of that! We are so fortunate to have so many great businesses and business owners on the island!

Michelle DiGiore, a real estate agent, can be reached at 813-453-3931 or michelle.digiore@tomlinstcyr.com.

coffee & conversation of the month

By **Michelle DiGiore**, Realtor and *Davis Islands Living* Resident Contributor
Photos courtesy of **Joe Saker & Deb Ogston**.

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Michelle DiGiore
Realtor, GRI
D.I. Resident
27 years



(813) 453-3931
michelle.tomlinstcyr.com