



Sunday, June 12, 2011

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Arthur Avenue Market Gets a Makeover: Your Vendor Guide

May 12, 2011



The Arthur Avenue Retail Market, in the heart of Belmont's "Little Italy," is undergoing major renovations this year, including a new exterior facade. (Photos by F.G. Pinto)

By Fausto Giovanni Pinto

In 1940, then-Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia opened indoor markets throughout New York City, a move to get pushcarts off the streets to make room for the increasingly popular automobile.

Among them was the Arthur Avenue Retail Market, an indoor bazaar of vendors hawking foods and goods in the heart of Belmont's "Little Italy," on Arthur Avenue between Crescent Avenue and East 187th Street.

Now in existence for over 70 years, the market is undergoing an estimated \$1 million renovation this year, thanks to a grant from the city's Economic Development Corporation with help from Councilman Joel Rivera and Congressman Jose Serrano.

The market's new modern-looking exterior was unveiled last month and a new service elevator and tiling are also in store.

According to Michael Rella, the market's association president, the improvements give the site a facelift while maintaining that old-time atmosphere so many enjoy.

Below is a look at the vendors inside.

Peter's Meat Market

This butcher shop in the market has been in business for over 40 years, and makes nine different kinds

of sausage every morning. They also offer prepared, ready-for-the-oven items like stuffed pork chops, meatballs and veal scaloppini.



Peter Servedio and Mike Rella own Peter's, the market's premiere butcher's shop.

Arthur Ave. Casa Grande Cigars

During his travels to Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic, store manager Paul DiSilvio learned how quality cigars were made. Seeing a need for handmade cigars in the Bronx, he opened this shop 14 years ago. Since then, six other cigar shops have popped up around Arthur Avenue, all by former employees of DiSilvio. The shop is also home to an Al Capone statue, popular among visitors.

Arthur Avenue Market Pasticceria

One of the market's newest members, the pasticceria opened a year ago, satisfying the sweet tooth of patrons. It serves gelato, espresso, and authentic Italian pastries like cannolis and cookies. The shop recently raised \$2,725 for Montefiore's Children's Hospital by selling red velvet cupcakes during a fundraising drive.

Liberatore's Garden

One of the 117 original vendors from when the market opened in 1940. Liberatore's sells specialty seeds all the way from Italy, including basil, arugula and olives. Chefs from all over the city come here looking for fresh, hard-to-find spices such as bay leaf trees.

Mount Carmel Food Shop

Your one-stop food mart for all things imported from Italy. Mount Carmel stocks a vast selection of pastas, cheeses and spices. The shop also carries a wide range of olive oils from different regions in Italy, including some made from truffles.

Boiano Foods

This vegetable and fruit market has some of the best-looking plum tomatoes around, not to mention a wide range of mushrooms and finnocchi, an type of Italian fennel.

Mike's Deli

The celebrity of the market, David Greco, son of owner Mike Greco, has been on the Food Network various times. He beat out television chef Bobby Flay on his show "Throwdown" in an eggplant parmigian cook-off. Featuring fine mozzarella, the deli also sells overstuffed heroes with catchy names like the "Yankee Big Boy."

Café Al Mercato

In the market for over a quarter of century, Café Al Mercato is known for their unique specialty pizza, which features cheese on the bottom and sauce on the top. They also sell authentic Italian soups, salads and pastas.

I Tech

One of the new kids in the market, I Tech opened a little over a year ago, offering computer repairs and security system installations.



Locals and tourists flock to the market, one of the neighborhood's most popular shopping spots.

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