

NEWS OF VIRGINIA  
BEACH AND YOUR  
NEIGHBORHOOD

DEC. 13, 2001

Vol. 39 No. 100

THE VIRGINIA BEACH  
**Beacon**Did you know that the Virginia Beach  
commonwealth's attorney's office is the  
only one in Virginia that operates a con-  
sumer affairs division?**Dessert specialist offers a sweet, fruity taste of Italy**His creations  
contain no  
preservativesBy STACY PARKER  
Correspondent

Think small.

It's not exactly the recipe for business success, but consider a product that can be served by the scoop, pint or gallon. Small steps can lead to bigger undertakings.

That theory is working for Ivan Gherardini, who specializes in smooth, velvety Italian ice cream called gelato and sorbetto, a fruity non-dairy dessert. He mixes and churns the concoctions in the back of his friend's gelato shop, Cafe Napoli at 1608 Atlantic Ave.

"I give you a taste," said generous Gherardini. It's a statement, not a question, coming from a man whose Italian expressions mingle with English.



PHOTO BY STACY PARKER

**IAN GHERARDINI**, owner of Gherardini's Gelato, makes gelato and sorbetto, which he sells to area restaurants and supermarkets.

A Thalia resident, Gherardini is proud of his work, offering tastes of chocolate, pistachio, raspberry and lemon — eruptions of sweet flavor matched by creamy cold. Gelato is made from fresh milk, cream, sugar and brown sugar. It contains no chemical preservatives.

Gherardini, 51, who came to

the United States in the 1970s, keeps his hometown of Florence, Italy, close to his heart. His grandfather taught him how to make gelato, and his family in the Old World owns an ice cream store. Though he has lived in San Francisco, Miami and New York, he has finally found a home for his family recipe in Virginia

Beach.

"Virginia is the perfect place to start an operation like this," he said. "It's similar to Italy — not too hot and not too cold."

"Designer of the flavor" is how he describes his role. Gherardini tailors the frozen mixture to suit his customers' wants. Mizuno, a Japanese restaurant at Le Promenade, serves his green tea sorbetto. For the Latin consumer, scoops of mango gelato tempt the palate.

Gherardini started his business in June, with the support of several investors. He markets plastic containers loaded with a variety of flavors to local restaurants, including Steinhilber's Thalia Acres Inn, Le Chambord and Il Giardino's, as well as markets like Farm Fresh at Great Neck Road and the Heritage Health Food Store. The price per pint is \$4.80, or about \$2 per scoop.

"We were already using gelatos and sorbetto, but we tried his stuff and thought it was really good," said Eric Samuelson, executive chef at

Vivo Cucina. "He has the ability to do whatever you want; he's there for you."

The First Colonial Road restaurant serves melon and pineapple sorbetto and chocolate and raspberry gelato.

"Look at his raspberry gelato and you can see the seeds," Samuelson said. "You know that it's real raspberry and not an extract. The freshness is what really sold us on it."

With a "Gherardini's Gelato" van for deliveries, an administrative office on Laskin Road and a Web site ready to take orders, Gherardini is putting gelato on the map — at least in Hampton Roads.

"I had some doubts. Honestly, today I need to say 'thank you' because the operation is going very good. I want to do this for life — develop the business and enjoy the life," Gherardini said.

For more information about Gherardini's Gelato, Italian Frozen Desserts, call 425-6414, or visit the Web site at [www.GelatoIntl.com](http://www.GelatoIntl.com)