Colombian cafe inspires Boalsburg natives to open business

Gerry Kistler moved to Colombia in 2010

He became friends with the owners of his favorite cafe

Kistler and his niece opened their own in State College
Co-owner Gerry Kistler, from left, co-owner Susan Jermusyk, Mark Jermusyk, Angie Castano and Jesus Bedoya pose for a photo inside the new Barranquero Cafe in State College. Castano and Bedoya own Cafe Jesus Martin in Colombia, which supplies all the coffee for Barranquero Cafe.
Coffee for the new Barranquero Cafe in State College is supplied by Cafe Jesus Martin in Colombia.

Photo provided
By Shawn Annarellisannarelli@centredaily.com

A little bit of Colombia has arrived in State College.

Susan Jermusyk and her uncle Gerry Kistler recently opened Barranquero Cafe at 324 E. Calder Way.

“I have been to Colombia a lot to visit my uncle, and I loved its atmosphere,” Jermusyk said. “I had a lot of coffee from there, and when he approached me I loved the idea of opening a cafe in State College. It’s something we don’t have and it’s something we need.”

Kistler, who grew up in Boalsburg, moved to Colombia in 2010 and found a charming cafe called Cafe Jesus Martin. It became his favorite place to go for coffee and he made two new friends, the owners of the cafe.

ADVERTISING

Kistler and Jermusyk knew who their supplier should be — Cafe Jesus Martin.

Jesus Bedoya, whose family has operated a farm more than 98 years and five generations, employs his own harvesters. They dry the coffee by laying beans, which are still inside the fruit, in a greenhouse for 45 days and then put them in sacs for eight months. The fruit shells fall off when the coffee is roasted.

The method, according to Jermusyk, enhances the flavor in the bean.

Barranquero Cafe will host a daylong grand opening and ribbon cutting, starting at 11 a.m. April 20 with the owners from Cafe Jesus Martin in attendance. Representatives of the Penn State Small Business Development Center also plan to attend.

“I was kind of lost from time to time on what to do next, and a friend suggested the SBDC,” Jermusyk said. “They’ve been super helpful. ... The process started about a year ago when I was working in the ER at Mount Nittany Medical Center. I was an emergency department technician, full-time nights. When I left in May, I worked at my uncle’s software company with half of my time and spent the rest developing a business plan.”

Their plan came to fruition at the 1,700-square-foot cafe off East Calder Way.

The cafe employs 10 people and can seat about 30, though they plan to add more seating. Main portions of the menu will include empanadas, pan de queso, juice and brownies.

“I’m excited for all this,” Jermusyk said. “I was really nervous before our soft opening. I just wanted to get the doors open and give everyone that came in a great experience. I hope the community is excited for us, too.”
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