

on the cover

FOOD BY

DeLeo

CATERING

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Where Passion Meets Possibility

BY HELANA SHUMWAY

As the premier catering service in Rochester, family-owned and operated Food by DeLeo Catering is in the business of creating unforgettable culinary experiences. Jason DeLeo started the business 23 years ago, and if anything, he and his wife, Nicole, along with their son, Antonio, are only getting started.

Antonio is Food by DeLeo's Executive Chef, and he and his father are both graduates of the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), one of the most prestigious culinary schools in the world. Antonio has worked at Michelin star restaurants and brings passion to the plate. DeLeo's Sous Chef, Dave Degroat, is also a CIA alum, rounding out the team with strength, technique, and precision.

With Julia Nuccitelli as the Culinary Events Coordinator and Nicole as co-owner and lead administrator, Food by DeLeo focuses on family while prioritizing exceptional world-class service for its customers. They have a 10,000 square-foot building in the heart of Rochester including two 3,500 square-foot kitchens, as well as a pizza trailer, a taco truck, and a 24-foot mobile kitchen.

**"WE BRING THE
RESTAURANT TO YOU."**



“If it’s not on the menu, we’ll make it anyway.”

A FULLY CUSTOMIZABLE EXPERIENCE

When it comes to picking a catering service for an event, the choice is very personal for the customer. Whether the occasion is a high school graduation, a corporate event, or a wedding serving hundreds of guests a plated dinner, Food by DeLeo makes every experience seamless, memorable, and delicious.

Above all, Jason and Antonio prioritize professionalism and flexibility, ensuring the customer’s needs are met from the moment they submit an inquiry all the way through the event’s execution.

Customization is key, Antonio says. A quick visit to DeLeo’s website (foodbydeleo.com) reveals dozens of appetizers, several options for plated dinners, including vegetarian and vegan options, full buffet menus, desserts, and much more. However, if a customer is looking for a type of cuisine or a dish not listed on their website’s menu, Jason, Antonio, and Dave guarantee a personalized menu.

Weddings are Food by DeLeo’s “bread and butter” (pun intended). The team understands the emotional, financial, and time commitments involved in creating that magical day. In addition to the two kitchens in DeLeo’s 550 Bernard Street building, a private room is devoted to tastings before a wedding. Jason says that when it comes to sharing the menu with their customers, “We don’t want any surprises.” Couples can schedule an evening in which Jason, Antonio, and Dave prepare the wedding’s entire menu to ensure every detail is perfect.

Food by DeLeo is excited to announce that it has recently obtained its New York State on-premises liquor license in Rochester, NY. Beginning this fall, the farm-to-table culinary team will offer curated beer, wine, and spirit pairings at both private and public events—elevating the catering experience to a full-service, dine-in level. This new offering paves the way for intimate tastings, wine-paired dinners, and venue-hosted events featuring thoughtful beverage pairings—all under the same roof of impeccable food and hospitality that Food by DeLeo has built its reputation on.



The team stresses the importance of getting to know their customers. As classically French-trained chefs, Jason, Antonio, and Dave have mastered flavor profiles and can cater to any palate. From traditional Italian staples to Pakistani-inspired dishes, the DeLeo chefs deliver a world-class menu that goes above and beyond.

Additionally, everything that DeLeo serves is homemade. From the perfectly leavened dough for their wood fire pizzas to a red wine demi-glace that takes three days to make, attention is in the details. They source local produce and meats whenever possible, with a few favorites including mushrooms from The Fun Guys Inc., organic microgreens and lettuce from Rochester Microgreens, and fresh fish from Captain Jim’s.

The best part? With their mobile kitchen, Food by DeLeo can offer exceptional service and mouthwatering flavors at nearly any venue, giving the customer incredible flexibility and invites creativity in both location and cuisine. If there are any doubts about what the team is capable of in this space, sweep away doubts – Jason, Antonio, and Dave have served a plated dinner for 500 guests out of the mobile kitchen without missing a beat.



PASSION, TEAMWORK & POSSIBILITY

Such motivation for excellence is fueled by the customer. Jason and Antonio agree that creating an authentic experience for their clientele is paramount. They love to work with self-described “foodies” who put their trust in the DeLeo team to build a menu and provide the highest level of hospitality.

Antonio says, “A chef puts their heart on a plate,” and it is that passion to serve and create experiences that drives Food by DeLeo every day. Since Antonio returned to Rochester in 2022 to join his dad in the family business, they have seen exponential growth each year and have no plans to slow down. It is not uncommon to work two weeks straight through, they say, but Antonio says, “You don’t do this grind unless you love it.”

With such opportunity comes the promise to maintain their DeLeo standard of excellence, which is a team effort. For every catered event, whether it be a small birthday party or a wedding with several hundred guests, either Jason, Antonio, or Dave will be present. Julia and Nicole work diligently to schedule all inquiries and tastings, and coordinate all details besides food, such as linens and tables as desired. Everyone has a role, and as Jason asserts, “We can’t do it without each other.”

Beyond maintaining their packed schedule, Food by DeLeo gives back to their neighborhood and the city. Bringing meals to community spaces and rehabilitation centers, and donating a percentage of sales during the holiday season to organizations such as Toys for Tots, they are focused on the “community model” and believe in extending a helping hand whenever possible.

Looking ahead, the team is excited to continue growing and serving Rochester and the Finger Lakes region. For those interested in Food by DeLeo’s services, Jason recommends reaching out 12-18 months prior to a wedding, and 4-8 weeks before graduations, celebrations, or corporate events.

Often, guests will ask where they can get DeLeo’s delectable food outside of an event. For now, Jason, Antonio, and team don’t have a brick-and-mortar location, but when asked if that could be in the future, Jason says, “Keep an eye out.” With such passion comes possibility.

The DeLeo team is ready to bring the restaurant to you!

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