

TOSCANA DIVINO



SAFETY IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY

by Tommaso Morelato

Due to the strong bond we have with Italy, we at Toscana Divino have observed with deep concern the early development of the pandemic, for this reason we had decided to close our restaurant before the Governor orders became official. The concern for the health of our guests, our employees and our families was stronger than the business drive. We did not know what the future was going to hold, how hard the virus would have hit and when, if at all, we would have been able to reopen.

But as our doors closed, another one opened: the opportunity to reflect on the how, one way or another, we are all interconnected, to other human beings and to the planet we inhabit. It was a dark time leading to bright revelations. We have always been fond of the concept “farm to table”, but, with Executive Chef Andrea Marchesin, we have decided to bring it steps further. We felt compelled to “sustain” local businesses, to provide healthier products and to create a closer connection to the food we are serving, to our suppliers and to our guests. That’s why, when it was time for reopening Toscana Divino, many changes were implemented (and challenges arose). Complying to the state and local guidelines was the first, natural step: limiting our capacity to a 50%, ensuring a 6 ft distance back-to-back the chairs, measuring our employees temperature daily upon arrival, providing hand sanitizing and creating visual reminders and communications both for our guests and our employees were, among many others, the easier steps. The real challenge was understanding how to keep providing warm and exceptional service while wearing a mask and maintaining safety distance. In the service industry, so used to human touch, smiles and personal connections, it all felt unnatural in the beginning. However true hospitality is stronger than a hidden smile and our staff quickly realized how to convey that same warm attitude through their eyes and the tone of their voice. Another challenge was represented by imposing some of these measure on our guests: the need to limit parties to 4 persons, strictly enforcing wearing a mask whenever not seating, the impossibility of using the bar counter, we were afraid they would have all perceived as different version of the word that is banned in the hospitality industry: “NO”. Fortunately our guests understand that all these measures are necessary and implemented for their safety as well. Before the re-opening, I asked myself if there was anything else we could do to protect our employees, guests and ourselves. That is when we brought in one additional safety measure: the Ozone machine, a powerful tool to purify the air quality and that, used at night, allows us to guarantee a safer environment. Times ahead are still going to be challenging, but we strongly believe in our “why”, and we know that providing the healthiest, most sustainable products in the safest environment possible is the right path to follow.