



CREAMY GORGONZOLA AND WALNUT WONTONS

Catch the Tradewinds

MEDITERRANEAN INSPIRATION IN SPRINGFIELD BY RACHAEL CARNES

Tradewinds Café & Catering Company co-owner Abbie Shadrick is on a mission to provide tasty, nutritious, Middle Eastern-inspired food on what used to be the site of a quiet, empty church at 4th and A Street in downtown Springfield.

“We’re part of the restaurant incubator program here at Sprout!,” Shadrick says, gesturing around the welcoming space where diners are feasting on Tradewinds’ signature dishes, along with fare from neighboring restaurants, all housed in a cheerful, open dining room with high steel tables and plenty of light.

“Sprout! provides space,” Shadrick says. “And they’re creating a curriculum to help start-up restaurants go from a café-food court setting to their own brick-and-mortar space.”

Since opening in January 2015, Shadrick says, it’s been helpful to be in the company of other growing businesses, including a Latin American eatery and a German café.

“From serving to learning new techniques, it’s been a collaborative experience,” she says.

Featuring restaurants like Shadrick’s, small businesses, classes and community events, business incubator Sprout! is owned by NEDCO, a nonprofit organization that helps neighborhoods and families build assets through home ownership, neighborhood revitalization and business development.

The first restaurant to jump on the bandwagon, Tradewinds offers a mostly Mediterranean menu, from pitas and pizzas to little plates and salads, with options for other flavor and spice combinations that strike the fancy of Shadrick and her partner, Mark Head.

“We’ve taken the Silk Route as inspiration,” Shadrick says.

Shadrick got her start creating recipes and cooking for nonprofits like Food Not Bombs and homeless shelters in and around town.

And after serving at festivals and developing a retail presence for their hummus and spanakopita at Friendly Street Market and Capella Market, Shadrick and Head decided the time was right to launch a business.

The beginning was a little rough. “There were days when we didn’t serve one customer, the whole darn day,” Shadrick says.

Retail kept them afloat, and now the café is full of diners ready for a tasty little departure to warmer, spicier climes — that yummy nexus between East and West.

Signature dishes, such as a creamy gorgonzola and walnut wonton, offer just the right balance between savory and sweet, a decadent and satisfying morsel, fresh with crunch and especially divine when dipped in house-made pear butter.

The café’s falafel, humble chickpeas and special spices, fried to a golden brown, are light and airy, irresistibly moist and delicious. With accompanying tahini, tzatziki and spicy red pepper sauce, they’re the perfect antidotes to the gray wet of an Oregon spring.

Shadrick benefits from Sprout!’s Friday afternoon farmers market, she says, which operates year round. Tradewinds regularly features local produce in daily specials and on the tasting menu for the café’s monthly supper club.



ABBIE SHADRICK

“When we make our food, we honor the traditions that are there, and we try to stick to the ingredients, making them the freshest possible,” Shadrick says. “Everything is made in house with our loving hands.” ■

Tradewinds Café is open 11am to 9 pm Tuesday through Saturday at 418 A Street in Springfield. A full menu is available on the restaurant’s Facebook page.

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