

FROM:



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Bottega Fiorentina - Serving Tuscan Food in Brookline for 27 Years

Brookline Community Aging Network (BrooklineCAN), a member-driven, volunteer organization primarily for older Brookline residents, is pleased to profile Bottega Fiorentina, the 12th local age-friendly business in our series.

BrooklineCAN's mission promotes service and activities to enable independent living and improve quality of life.

Bottega Fiorentina, a Tuscan restaurant, is situated at the corner of Harvard and Babcock Streets in the heart of Coolidge Corner. Andrea Ferrini, the original owner, shaped a menu in the style of his hometown, Florence, Italy. His many regular customers counted on a menu of daily selections for mostly take-out meals, although there was also a small bar and a table for dining in.

Andrea retired in September, 2019, and the new owners, Felipe and Vanessa Angeline, took over as owners and managers. Felipe, a native of Sao Paulo, Brazil, arrived in the US in 2008. His wife, Vanessa, a designer, is Italian. Felipe, who had worked on and off at the Bottega from 2009 to 2019, admired Andrea's business model. He was looking for a business to buy and jumped at the opportunity to buy the Bottega.

Five months after they bought the restaurant, the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Felipe says about purchasing a business in the middle of a pandemic, "What does

not kill you makes you stronger.” Neither he, nor Andrea, the original owner, laid off anyone during the pandemic.

Felipe commented that following his purchase of the Brookline store, he received 100% community support to help keep the business going. People bought gift cards and did not use them. One man even purchased a \$100 gift card, which he never used.

Like all businesses profiled on BrooklineCAN.org, (<https://brooklinecan.org/afb-profiles.html>), Bottega Fiorentina is an age-friendly business. “Italian food by itself is age friendly,” noted Felipe. “It’s simple food, very homey. It’s grandmother’s food.”

The layout of Bottega Fiorentina is also simple. Small tables and chairs are on hand throughout the eatery where visitors can sit comfortably while waiting for their take-out order. The staff is friendly and ready to answer questions.

In addition to small tables throughout the Bottega, the picnic table that had sat at the front of the store has been replaced with a contemporary table, covered with assorted packages of food and gifts. On the wall behind the table is a pegboard covered with a range of foods, sauces, and a collection of condiments.

Although Felipe has not altered the menu and has maintained all the recipes, he and Vanessa have updated the design of the store. This past December they began renovation, purchasing new equipment, and generally spending money.

Felipe and Vanessa have lived in South Boston since 2016. They have a two-year-old daughter, Antonale.

Although Felipe had no connection with Brookline before working at the Bottega, he says, “The town has been great to me.” Town workers helped him complete the paperwork necessary to sign over the property. They shared “tips” about how to transfer necessary licenses from the previous owner.

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