

# Ostara's Coffee House still brewing after five years

By JOHN ALVAREZ  
Special to the Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Ostara's Coffee House opened in 2018 at 600 Park Blvd. with a good bit of fanfare for a starting business.

After all, the sister-in-law team of Victoria and Anastasia Maniotis were locals with many friends and family members to support their organic coffee shop. They also had a suitable location in a complex filled with antiques stores and art galleries, pet care shops and the occasional restaurant.

The name Ostara's, which stands for the Greek goddess of spring and rebirth, was so unique that people would enter the café like sailors answering the sirens' call just to ask what the name meant, but would stay for the coffee.

Add to that the images appearing on social media sites of Victoria Ionnis Maniotis' daughter Ariadne handing change to customers with her infectious smile — earning her the title, "The Baby Barista," by everyone who met her — and the café was off to a great start.

But that was five years ago. Since then, there has been pandemic that caused the tourist trade to slow down to a crawl for several long months.

Articles that had been written by corporate specialists in consumer magazines, business sections of newspapers or commerce bloggers on their websites spoke of doom and gloom for new businesses that had started in the past few years.

Coffeehouses were signaled out by these experts because most of them that have started recently seem to be here one day and gone the next. According to their estimations, experts claim that only 20 percent of coffee shops survive to make it to their first five years.

"Actually, I read in some article that it was 28 percent," Victoria Maniotis said.

In their first five years, Ostara's developed from a niche organic coffee café to a community hub where many of gather to celebrate. On many days, the family makes Ostara's feel like home.

If you ask the average customer who comes to the café with frequent regularity, the success of Ostara's was in the stars. Most patrons admire the fun and charm that has been felt there from day one. But, if Anastasia Maniotis was going to be honest, the style of success the café has been receiving was not exactly what she expected.

"I think the success of our first two years was how we thought it was going to continue being," she said. "But more people started walking in. We started to realize we were becoming very busy, and it was very nice. It is unbelievable sometimes just how successful and popular we are."

Victoria Maniotis agreed and added, "I expecting us to get better over time. I didn't expect us to have a following like we do. I didn't realize how big of a following Ostara's had till this year. Ioannis and I have our second daughter this year named Oonagh. When I had her, more people reached out to me with such kindness. They are partaking in our personal lives. We lost a beloved family member this year and people were very wonderful during that time reaching out to us in our grief. It was during moments like this when I realized so many people are part of our lives."

Another reason for Ostara's success is the fact that the location is a place features the talents of women. Displayed throughout the

coffee house are original artwork, jewelry, paintings, crafts, flowers and a host of other items created, grown or developed by women.

"I think it's the way the café developed because Anastasia and I are always here," Victoria Maniotis said. "We have been female focus. We didn't intend for Ostara's to be that way. We were promoting female artist and businesses. And we have the kids in here as well and I had two girls. There are also strong men that are supporting us behind the scenes. Besides all the work Ioannis has done for us maintenance wise, Bruce McCausland of 'Signs Plus of Printings in Wildwood' is doing all of our print work. This job is not easy. Thanks goodness we are not doing this alone. It's really become such a community and neither one of us truly expected it."

It so nice to have such support," Anastasia Maniotis added. "It really is amazing to me. People just keep coming back. It's crazy but you got to enjoy it."

As for the next five years, the two just want to be right where they are to see what happens.

"I don't plan on going anywhere," Victoria Maniotis said. "I want to stay here and watch my children grow. I want to watch my family grow. For the past five years, it has been such a learning experience for us. We started bringing the community together, we started connecting people. And it felt good. For the next five years, I hope to be here and continue to get better and better at what we are doing."

Ostara's Coffee House is located at 600 Park Blvd. in West Cape May. Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays to Sundays and will expand during the summer season.



John Alvarez/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

The staff at Ostara's Coffee House includes Victoria Maniotis, Oonagh Maniotis, Ariadne Maniotis, Anastasia Maniotis, Ioannis Maniotis and Bruce McCausland.

## City tries to curb long-term parking

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — You may have seen a dust- or pollen-covered car parked near City Hall or Victorian Towers that doesn't ever seem to leave its space.

City Council tabled an ordinance to allow the city to ticket or tow vehicles left in the same parking space on a public street for seven or more days.

Councilwoman Maureen McDade asked if the ordinance included contractor vehicles left in one place for weeks. City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said the ordinance covered contractors and other city ordinances addressed parking of trailers and boats.

Deputy Mayor Lorraine Baldwin the seven-day parking limit could affect someone who left for a week of vacation.

City Manager Mike Voll said police and code enforcement would have discretion.

"They're just not going to go along and start tagging and towing," he said.

Councilman Mike Yeager said his neighbors have no driveway and have no choice other than parking in the street in front of their house.

Police Chief Dekon Fashaw said Victorian Towers made some changes and many of its residents

were parking on Carpenters Lane for the entire summer, some using handicapped tags.

"There's no meter revenue coming in from that and they are parking there for more than seven days," he said.

He said police would run the license tag on a car to verify the owner's address before taking action. A problem could occur with second home owners who may park a car with an out-of-state tag in front of their house, Fashaw said.

Some second homeowners may leave a car in the city all year, he said, which could be identified with some type of decal issued by the city.

Mayor Zack Mullock said it was not the aim of council to tow cars or garner extra revenue for the city, it wished to solve the issue of cars left in a space for a long period of time.

McDade suggested residents leaving a car in front of their house for longer period of time could inform the city.

Mullock said the ordinance was the result of citizen complaints.

Councilman Shaine Meier said some whole house renters may not move their cars for a week. He suggested an eight-day time period.

Fashaw said enforcement would be the result of receiving a complaint since officers did not have time to

check many parked cars.

Gillin-Schwartz said the intent of the ordinance was to "prevent vehicles being left with no intent to come back to them." He suggested the ordinance highlight the process of enforcement.

McDade volunteered to work with Gillin-Schwartz and Fashaw to recraft the ordinance.

### Opening Weekend

## April 1st & 2nd

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29	2:37	3:23	9:14	8:57
30	3:43	4:29	10:17	10:02
31	4:46	5:25	11:13	11:00
1	5:40	6:13	11:59	11:51
2	6:26	6:55		12:38
3	7:07	7:33	12:37	1:13
4	7:45	8:09	1:18	1:45
5	8:21	8:43	1:58	2:16

MOON PHASES

First quarter, March 29 • full moon, April 6

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