



## Best New Gelateria: Aunt Lena's Creamery

4040 S. Arizona Ave., Ste. 7, Chandler  
480-802-1100  
auntlena.net

**CUISINE:** Gelato

**PRICE:** \$

**ATMOSPHERE:** Using an Italian piazza as their inspiration, owners Ray and Cheryl D'Ottavio have decorated their cozy, clean gelateria with warm colors, tiled floors, twinkling lights across the ceiling, synthetic Italian trees (olive and maple) and a rich wood-and-glass case that shows off decadent mounds of their mouth-watering gelato. In addition, Cheryl, who runs the front of the house, welcomes repeat customers with a hug and a kiss, and gives everyone a friendly reception. It's the Italian way, after all.

**OUTDOOR SEATING:** Yes

**KEY PLAYERS:** Husband-and-wife owners Ray and Cheryl D'Ottavio, who moved to Arizona from Virginia in 2004. East Coasters and Italians at heart (second-generation), the couple wanted to introduce gelato to Arizona since they had grown up on the sweet treat. Ray, who has a background as an executive chef and in the pastry biz, works the back of the house, where he whips up batch after handmade batch of gelato seven days a week. Their children, Jennifer, 21, and Raymond, 15, help out in the shop, too. Business partners Paul and KiCho Locigno remain on the East Coast.

**WHY WE LOVE IT:** Unlike some ice cream/gelato shops that rely on pastes and powders to perk up their desserts, Aunt Lena's uses all-natural ingredients, including fruit from their own trees, and sources most of their products from Italy - even the pistachios and hazelnuts. And with more than 140 rotating flavors (look for pumpkin spice this fall and eggnog this winter), we're never out of yummy options.

**MUST-TRY MENU ITEMS:** Best-sellers include birthday cake, cannoli, oreo and pistachio (one of Ray's favs). Cheryl enjoys a fruity combo of lemon and raspberry.

**DRINK TO DIE FOR:** Aunt Lena's serves up Illy espresso, or you can turn any of the gelatos into a shake for an extra creamy treat.

**SECRET OF THE HOUSE:** Any gelato mimicking your favorite dessert - apple pie, cannoli, birthday cake, tiramisu - is made using the real thing. In other words, Ray bakes a cake, ices it and soaks it in milk before he adds it to the gelato mix. It takes more time and effort, but the end-result creates a lot of "wows" and "mmms."

**HOURS:** 1 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Sunday-Thursday; 1 p.m.-9:30 p.m., Friday-Saturday

**TAKES RESERVATIONS:** No

## Vogue Bistro

15411 W. Waddell Road, Ste. 108, Surprise  
623-544-9109  
voguebistro.com

**OPENED:** March 2008

**CUISINE:** French/American

**PRICE:** \$\$-\$\$\$

**ATMOSPHERE:** Stylish and sleek with touches of French cottage charm. A long marble bar gets illuminated by dangling blue and violet lights overhead, and a bejeweled chandelier in the center of the bistro adds a glowing warmth to the bright orange accent walls. The restaurant's name is no mistake, either; models strut the catwalk on TV screens throughout the restaurant, and "designer" martinis like the Armani, Gucci and Dior draw their inspiration from fashion's elite.

**OUTDOOR SEATING:** Yes

**KEY PLAYERS:** Chef-owner Aurore de Beauduy, who honed her culinary talents in France. After graduating from Le Cordon Bleu in France, Aurore cooked for French government officials and celebrities at the renowned Potel & Chabot. In 1988, she relocated to the U.S. to be a chef at the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago, and after a few more career moves, she ended up at the Silverleaf Country Club in Scottsdale's DC Ranch in 2004. Aurore's husband, Roman Yasin-sky, acts as GM and co-owner.

**WHY WE LOVE IT:** Aside from giving the west side some bragging rights, we love the obvious but unpretentious vibe Vogue gives off. Anyone who has fallen in love with the City of Lights will feel like they're back in one of Paris' romantic *arrondissements* (neighborhoods), and even if you've never made it across the Atlantic, the cool, sexy ambiance and stellar yet affordable menu will be enough to lure you back again and again.

**MUST-TRY MENU ITEMS:** Those who favor French cuisine will delight in starters of *foie gras* cured in Cognac and served with sweet fig-apple compote on brioche toast (\$12); or a plate of Burgundian escargot baked in puffed pastry with herb-garlic butter (\$7). If you're off the liver and snails diet, however, not to worry. Chef Aurore has added plenty of American touches to her menu, including two burgers, meatloaf and mac and cheese made with truffle oil and bits of pancetta (\$3). For entrées, we recommend the Steak Vogue, a medium rare Black Angus hanger cut steak cooked with brandied peppercorn sauce and served with Vogue's crispy fries (\$15). We also love the simple but hearty roasted half-chicken, which simmers slowly in herb-garlic *jus* and comes with buttery Yukon gold potatoes and roasted carrots (\$15). This is comfort food at its best.

**DRINK TO DIE FOR:** With 12 martinis, a slew of bourbon-enhanced cocktails and a long list of beers (from Belgian and British ales to stouts, porters and lagers), it's difficult to choose just one, but we have to go with the house martini here, the Vogue. This extra dry version of a dirty martini comes with a tasty three-olive garnish (filled with bleu cheese, smoked salmon cream cheese, and tomatillo).

**SECRET OF THE HOUSE:** As any good chef tends to do, Aurore changes her menu often and offers a special dish each day. One day it could be the grilled halibut stuffed with Japanese eggplant; the next, roasted rack of lamb and artichoke stuffed with brie, heirloom tomatoes and croutons. Call ahead to find out what the surprise entrée of the day is. And if you can't seem get to the West Valley, make chef Aurore come to you; Vogue offers catering for special occasions.

**HOURS:** 11:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday (may open Mondays for the fall)

**TAKES RESERVATIONS:** Yes (In fact, they're strongly recommended.)

**PM**

— Reach us at [phxmag@citieswestpub.com](mailto:phxmag@citieswestpub.com).

Large scallops with parsnip purée, broccolini, rose champagne vinaigrette and basil oil.

