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ITALIAN REPRODUCTION: LA BOTTEGA, ROOSEVELT FIELD

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Like so many bunny rabbits, La Bottega restaurants are multiplying all over Long Island. The current number is up at 11 or 12, depending upon whether you count the affiliated Caffè Barocco in Garden City Park.

The latest birth took place last week at Roosevelt Field, in the upper level digs of the former Panino Cafe, situated between Nordstrom and Macy's. As a fan of La Bottega's salads and panini (who is at Roosevelt Field a bit too regularly), I say hooray. (Click [here](#) to read the 2 and 1/2 star review I gave the Garden City South La Bottega).

So, what's the deal with this mini empire that started out as a small Garden City South panino place? According to founder Giuseppe Ruta, each of the new La Bottega stores is independently owned. What unites them is Ruta's supervision in maintaining the standards behind the name.

This is how he puts it: "For each location I do the initial interview, hiring and training of the chef in order to teach and maintain the quality of La Bottega... we give the cooks the proper training needed and after the store opens, we give them continuous support. Once on their own, at their location, each chef does all of their own cooking in house. Each location is responsible to maintain their own dining menu. Depending on the cook or the owner, 'specials' are changed and modified every week. La Bottega's panini, salads and bruschette menu is to remain the same everywhere."

Right now, Ruta says, he's focusing on Long Island but hopes to soon spread the LB brand to New York City and other states.

Currently, this is the rundown of La Bottega locales: Garden City South, Carle Place, Rockville Centre, Oceanside, Merrick, Huntington, Floral Park, Roslyn, Long Beach, Massapequa and, now, Garden City. Be on the lookout for an opening at The Arches in Deer Park sometime soon.

The new La Bottega is at Roosevelt Field (630 Old Country Rd.), Garden City, 516-248-4529, labottegagourmet.com.

Newsday photo of La Bottega panino/Audrey C. Tiernan