



## SRJC Alumni & Friends Association

Sofia Petridis-Lim spent a decade flying the friendly skies overseas before landing in northern California.

A native European of Greek-French-Italian descent, Sofia emigrated to the United States with a passion for cooking. A career changer twice over and a holder of a degrees in Administration Management and International Studies, Sofia was pursuing a job in healthcare after successfully managing a series of psychotherapy clinics when she decided to go back to school. “I’ve always wanted to run my own restaurant and when I couldn’t find a job in healthcare, I knew it was time to materialize my dream so I registered at the JC in the Culinary Arts program”.

Sofia learned to cook Greek and Mediterranean dishes from her grandmother, but needed the professional training from a culinary program to run her own restaurant. As soon as she enrolled in the JC Culinary Arts program, Sofia launched a search to find an appropriate location for her own restaurant to achieve her dream. From the first day of class to every introduction she made as a student, Sofia was clear that opening her own restaurant was her top priority.



While in the program, Sofia adjusted to taking classes as an older student, as well as competing with a new generation of students. She credits her daughter for tutoring her in the latest electronic technology as well as providing the perspective of the younger generation. However, it was the classes at the JC that prepared her for launching her own restaurant and bakery. A focused and motivated individual, Sofia graduated with honors from the JC in July 2012 after completing the program in 15 months.

Sofia praises a number of the classes in the Culinary Arts program in particular. “Sanitation and Safety, Knife Skills – I thought I knew it all, but these classes were amazing for taking my skills to the next level.” She found the experience working in the Culinary Café to be particularly helpful in learning how to play all the necessary roles in managing a restaurant.

Despite the challenges inherent in opening your own business, Sofia is grateful to her new landlord as well as the instructors in the Culinary Arts program at the JC and her business advisor from the JC’s Small Business Development Center. “I can’t thank the instructors at the JC enough for their support and encouragement as I go through this process.”

Taverna Sofia, a Greek and Mediterranean restaurant located behind Copperfield’s Bookstore in Healdsburg at 244 Healdsburg Ave, will be opening in mid-October. Sofia will offer traditional foods of the region, including fresh baked goods. Her specialties include bougasta, a delicious Greek pastry of phyllo dough and custard, as well as moussaka, a classic Mediterranean dish. Guests are invited to dine in the al-fresco courtyard featuring an amazing mural of Greek island Santorini painted by a local artist.

Stop by Taverna Sofia in Healdsburg beginning in mid-October for a taste of a JC alumna’s success.