



Molto Bene Espresso

By Jasmine Rios | Posted July 2, 2011, 5:56 p.m.

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In such a vibrant, culturally rich neighborhood as Hillcrest, it's comforting to find an alternative to corporate chain coffeehouses. Open since April 2011, Caffé Vergnano 1882 on Fifth Avenue is a coffee connoisseurs diamond in the rough. Where "Made in Italia" is the motto, this panache Italian import nestled cozily between Robinson and University uses certified baristas trained in the art of authentic Italian espresso making. Guests can sip espresso, prepared in the old world tradition, while they relax in a stylish nouveau setting with striking red walls, sleek black leather chairs, and a stunning view of the grande chrome espresso machine at the forefront.

Not your typical coffeehouse, the experience is enhanced by its delicious variety of chocolate infused Marocchino concoctions. Thirsty for something cool and different? Try a Lurisia Chinotto acqua minerale. Made from the citrus fruit of the myrtle-leaved orange tree (commonly used in marmalade and a primary ingredient of Compari), this all natural, bittersweet soft drink from the Italian Riviera will satisfy and stimulate your senses, as you won't find Lurisia Chinotto anywhere else in San Diego. Distribution is exclusive to this area and a rare find in this country.

Gourmet food offerings at Caffé Vergnano range from pasta to pastry and are prepared in-house; with some outside catered specialty items.

Caffé Vergnano may be the new kid on the block domestically, but this is no small operation. Founded by Domenico Vergnano in 1882 in Chieri, Italy, the

Caffé Vergnano espresso brand is Italy's oldest coffee manufacturer. Coffee is sold by the pound in more than forty coffeehouses worldwide including France, Germany, England, Hong Kong, the Middle East, and of course -- Italy.

The Caffé Vergnano coffee brand first became available in the US in 2010 at New York City's Eataly -- an upscale culinary shopping and dining complex on Fifth Avenue; inspired by a gourmet food and wine market in Turin, Italy.

Outside of the company's coffee distribution/tasting area at Eataly in NYC, Fifth Avenue in San Diego is the first official Caffé Vergnano coffeehouse location in the country. Locations in the La Jolla and Los Angeles regions are expected to follow.

Open daily from 8 to 8, you'll find the manager Hector Rabellino, also imported from Italy, on the premises at the Hillcrest location most days. Strike up a conversation and he'll make you feel like you're part of the family.

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1882sandiego.com **Image**

