



STEVE'S PLACE

A True Glens Falls Mainstay
Steve's Place

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Glens Falls. Some call it Hometown USA, others call it Tree City. But no matter what you call it, there is not a generation alive that doesn't have a memory of Steve's Place. In 1966, Steve Vamvalis opened an ice cream shop. At the time, the landscape was quite different. The now restaurant was just a little soft serve ice cream parlor next to a car wash and laundromat. Steve's place has added as many additions to the building as they have the menu. In 1976, after ten years, Steve's Place was no longer the local ice cream parlor. Doing away with the soft serve, Steve focused on being a restaurant. His philosophy was simple... great service, fair price, great food.

In 1980, Christine Vamvalis, Steve's sister, came on board full-time. Christine has been involved with the business in one way or another since she was fourteen. With an accounting degree from ACC, she immediately became a great source of strength for Steve. When asked, Steve said "It's been all her." In 2001, Nick Vamvalis joined his family. After getting a culinary degree, Nick brings a new spin on classic favorites. However, in this writer's opinion, the best omelet in the capital region is still made by none other than Steve Vamvalis (regardless of what other publications may report). That said, with Nick in the kitchen, the soups and desserts are second to none. We had the opportunity to sit with the Vamvalis family and get their perspective on the meaning of success, family, and what it means to be a part of our local history.

Success Magazine: Steve's Place has been in business for forty-one years. What is the secret to your longevity?

Christine Vamvalis-Haley: Hard work and family values.

SM: How did you come to own the restaurant?

CVH: After obtaining an accounting degree from ACC, I joined the restaurant full-time. Our balance sheet increased each year, and I earned my share in the business.

SM: What challenges have you faced as a family owned business?

CVH: Do you know Steve? (Ha ha) Yeah, there have been tensions, but we never let it get in the way of business. I think we have mellowed as we've aged.

SM: What can a patron expect from their dining experience at Steve's Place?

CVH: Fast service, good food, fair prices, and a few laughs.

SM: What is your specialty?

CVH: Steve would say omelets. But since Nick joined the team in 2001, with a culinary degree, all of our classics have been made better—especially our breakfast, soups, specials, homemade desserts, fresh ground coffee, omelets, hot turkey sandwiches, clubs, spanakopita, lentil soup, and sugar-free desserts.

SM: How has your menu changed over the years?

CVH: The menu has changed drastically. We started with just soft serve ice cream and from there we moved to hot dogs, hamburgers and French fries. Finally, in 1976, we moved away from soft serve altogether and became a full-service restaurant offering breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

SM: You must have some really loyal regulars. What does their support mean to you?

CVH: Everything! We wouldn't be here without them.

SM: How is the resurgence of downtown Glens Falls going to affect your business?

CVH: We are really looking forward to the revitalization of downtown. We want more people to share in the beauty of what our area has to offer.

SM: Do you have hopes of future generations taking over the family business?

CVH: With Nick joining in 2001, the next generation of the Vamvalis family will be here to serve the next generation of Glens Falls.

SM: What would you like to tell patrons about Steve's Place that they may not already know?

CVH: Try different things—they may be surprisingly good. Don't forget us—breakfast, lunch, dinner—anytime! We have something to please everyone in the family.