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Take a sweet retreat

Dolce Basking Ridge sweetens pot with luxury accommodations, fine dining

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The translation of the Italian word "dolce" is sweet, and if you haven't yet experienced Dolce Hotels and Resorts, then you're in for a treat.

Dolce Basking Ridge, a new AAA Four Diamond-rated property of the acclaimed international company, recently opened in the heart of Somerset County.

Sitting on nearly three-dozen acres, Dolce Basking Ridge recently unveiled a multimillion dollar renovation of its facilities, including 71 deluxe guest rooms, a 4,700-square-foot ballroom, 25 meeting rooms and a tiered amphitheater equipped with the latest luxury amenities and technology.

"Dolce Basking Ridge is a unique, full-service hotel specializing in delivering an exceptional meeting experience by providing the most hospitable environment for people to meet and learn," says Mark J. Swetman, regional director of sales and marketing. "Whether for business or leisure, distinctive elements inspire the most productive meetings, events and celebrated experiences.

"Dolce Basking Ridge integrates superior Neo-American cuisine in our new restaurant, Vita, with new amenities such as our new Espresso and Wine lobby bar, new fitness facilities, beautifully redesigned south courtyard, state-of-the-art conference center technology and a community of passionate, intuitive associates. It is our goal to remain at the forefront of the hospitality industry."

Dolce Hotels and Resorts, headquartered in Montvale, was founded in 1981 as Dolce International but changed its name earlier this year to more accurately reflect the width, breadth and caliber of its services and guest amenities.

Today, its portfolio includes 26 North American and European properties which not only are conference centers but also destinations for leisure guests to experience weekend retreats, casual or elegant dinners, wedding receptions and other social events.

All about the food

Cuisine is a key core of the Dolce philosophy, and its highly trained chefs pay great attention to detail in making certain food served is gourmet, plentiful, healthy and full of variety.

Executive chef Paul Bogardus oversees Vita. A graduate of Johnson and Wales University's culinary program, his menu selections are American-inspired, and the restaurant's open-hearth exhibition kitchen affords diners views of Bogardus and his culinary team preparing their house specialties.

Vita a la carte entrees can include grilled beef hangar steak with dry-seasoned yucca fries, chimichurri and onion crisps; portabella and mozzarella ravioli with roasted chestnut puree and sherry cream reduction; grilled center-cut Stoney Field pork chop with apple shallot slaw and port wine glaze

and grilled Maine King Salmon with mushroom ragout and truffle cream.

"We are also kicking off the Dolce Culinary Academy," says Stephen J. Giblin, Dolce president and chief operating officer. "This will allow chefs from all our Dolce properties to share specialty dishes and train fellow chefs in their preparation. Our goal is to round out our chefs so they experience everything."

A sight to see

Renowned French executive chef Alain Montigny of Dolce Chantilly outside of Paris recently joined Bogardus and seven other Dolce master chefs in the Vita kitchen to prepare signature dishes for an intimate gathering of Dolce customers and corporate teams.

Montigny, a recent recipient of the highly coveted Michelin star, and Bogardus prepared an elegant signature dish — candied Hudson Valley foie gras with dried fruit, red pitaya jelly, artfully topped with a sugar-dipped hazelnut.

Whether it is elegant food, luxurious amenities or modern technology, Dolce Basking Ridge has global reach. But you don't have to fly to Paris to experience it. It's right in your backyard.
