



# Restaurant couple defend themselves against rumours

By John Lawrence

A long-established restaurant owner in East Finchley has been forced to take to social media to dispel rumours that his business is a money-laundering operation.



Husband and wife team: Maria and Aki Toumazos outside the restaurant they have run for 16 years. Photo John Lawrence

Aki Toumazos, who with his wife Maria runs Creightons Brasserie and Genzo Greek in the High Road, got wind that people were sharing unfounded suspicions after his two premises went through a rapid number of name changes in the past six years.

Starting off as Genzo, the main restaurant became Chukkas and then Sika for short periods before changing to Creightons last year. The smaller Genzo Greek restaurant next door has had different names too and has opened and closed over the period.

As new name signs appeared regularly above the door, rumours went round that something suspicious was going on. Some speculated that it was an elaborate money-laundering scheme or some kind of tax dodge, and others even wondered if drug trafficking was involved.

## Explanation

Aki, who was not on social media, finally joined the East Finchley Community Facebook group a couple of months ago where he was able to explain the true situation openly. He also spoke to *The Archer*.

He told us that he has been in East Finchley for more than 16 years and the company that runs the restaurants has always been the same and never gone bankrupt. He said he and Maria

work seven days a week to try to make ends meet in a difficult hospitality industry.

Smiling, he admitted that even he struggles to remember all the name and menu changes. These have come about depending on the chefs Aki is able to employ and keep, sometimes pan-Asian, sometimes Indian, sometimes Caribbean, sometimes his native Greek. When chefs change, he's forced to change the offering.

## Genzo Greek reopening

He bought and opened the smaller Genzo Greek next door for his grown-up sons Lourenzo and Fodi to run. When they went into the finance careers they had studied for he was left to run both restaurants, often manning the kitchens himself, which led to short periods where one had to close.

Aki told us: "I'm happy to get the truth out in the open. Our regular customers have been supportive all the way and we've had plenty of positive reaction to what I wrote. We've even started to see new faces coming in to dine."

Genzo Greek, which has been closed over the summer, is reopening this month and Creightons continues to welcome diners so Aki and Maria will be back to running two restaurants alongside each other again.

## Review of road penalty charges

London Councils has launched a consultation that is likely to see a rise in the level of penalty charges for traffic offences, breaking parking rules and bus lane contraventions on borough roads across the capital, including Barnet and Haringey.

The maximum charge currently stands at £130. Transport for London has already raised the maximum penalty on the Red Routes it is responsible for to £160.

The number of penalty notices issued in London has increased by 50% over the last 12 years and London boroughs say they are concerned that the current charge levels are not high enough to act as a deterrent.

The consultation runs until Monday 23 October. To respond to the consultation visit [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/LondonParkingChargesConsultation](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/LondonParkingChargesConsultation)



New name, new owner: Ali Karimi at Fish N Flame. Photo Mike Coles

## Touch of the old at new fish restaurant

By Diana Cormack

At the beginning of August a long-established High Road business took on a new look when the Poseidon Fish Restaurant became Fish 'n' Flame. An announcement by former owner Angie Lymbourides thanking their loyal customers informed them that the name of the chip shop and restaurant specialising in Greek dishes was disappearing after close to 40 years.

However, it is also a fresh beginning because new owner Ali Karimi is continuing to offer the traditional fish menu along with a greater emphasis on meat dishes, hence the name Fish 'n' Flame, which includes his special Persian style kebab. Open seven days a week, there are special lunch time offers in the take-away and restaurant, plus children's meals available.

Ali was pleased to tell *The Archer* that the same chef is continuing to work there. His own long-term interest in food

has seen him running similar establishments outside London which had to fit in to his professional development, for Ali has a PHD in cybersecurity. Still involved with Loughborough University, he is looking to transfer down here.

So what brought him to East Finchley? Having seen various places, Ali says he was struck by the friendliness of the people and described them as being "really good". We hope that is how they will soon be describing the food at Fish 'n' Flame.

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