

THE LIST

Alon's Bakery & Market

Experience the unexpected

Have you heard that Alon's Bakery and Market has opened a store in Dunwoody? I hadn't until I was invited to take a personal tour by Pastry Chef Alon Balshan. Now that my favorite bakery—a mainstay among Virginia-Highland residents since opening its doors in 1992—was much closer to home, I was ecstatic. Besides being a delicious new culinary option, the Alon's locale offers convenience to those living in close proximity to the Perimeter, and now is open to foodies yet to discover this delicious gem.

Born in Israel, Balshan used all of the money he had, plus a few loans from his father, to open Alon's Bakery and Market in Virginia-Highland. What started as a small eatery is now a thriving Atlanta mainstay offering a variety of European-style pastries, cookies, breads and wedding cakes, as well as artisan cheeses (more than 120 varieties from local and global producers), prepared gourmet foods, wines, gifts and ready-to-cook seasoned meats.

Like anyone who already has experienced Alon's, I knew what to expect walking into the bakery's Dunwoody location—a mouth-watering dessert counter, a gourmet sandwich and salad bar, and copious cheeses. What I wasn't prepared for was what I discovered behind the scenes during a tour that included a sneak peek of the kitchen. I caught a coveted glance of just what goes into making the chocolates and gelato that have made Alon's so praise-worthy. It was a sensory playground as I tasted pistachio gelato with fresh raspberry reduction and slices of fresh peaches, peanut butter and jelly chocolates, flavorful rotisserie chicken and a variety of hors d'oeuvres, including a truffle mousse pâté (my favorite). As impressed as I was with the quality and delectability of the cuisine, I was even more taken with the preparation process.

Balshan and his staff take pride in the made-from-scratch bakery, where everything is freshly prepared on site. The pistachio gelato, for example, is made from pure pistachio paste, and the mint chocolates are flavored with real mint leaves. Gourmet sandwich meats are roasted in house, and, when in season, some vegetables are organically farmed. This made-from-scratch philosophy extends to every sector of Balshan's kitchen and demands that dedicated employees keep late hours. No wonder everything consistently tastes so good!

With expansion comes a big-time atmosphere, and Alon's offers that, too. The Alon's Dunwoody store is a significantly larger venue than its Virginia-Highland location. Its spacious layout is warmed by deep yellow hues and familiar brick arches. Dunwoody diners are welcome to box a few goodies to go, such as savory lemon squares or double chocolate chip cookies, or choose to dine in at the wine bar or outside on the patio. While Alon's is bigger, its quality cuisine is deliciously unchanged. —JENNA WILLIAMS

Alon's newest location
(across from Perimeter Mall):
Park Place, 4505 Ashford
Dunwoody Road N.E.
678.397.1781
alons.com.



An assortment of wines and original kitchen goods make the perfect gift.



From the chocolate soufflé cake to the lemon raspberry mousse, the individual desserts are pieces of heaven made just for you.



With more than a dozen flavors to choose from, Alon's gelato is a great summer treat.