

player Ariel Qassis and percussionist Elad Cohen Bonen for a musical exploration that moves between urban textures and broader regional influences.

A trailblazing artist who has composed extensively for theater and contemporary dance, Bright builds the set around his signature songs, such as “On the Way Home” and “A Person Needs a Home.”

May 7 at 8:30 p.m., *Confederation House, Jerusalem*. For more information and tickets: (02) 539-9360 or [www.confederationhouse.org](http://www.confederationhouse.org)

## 8. STYLE MEETS URGENCY

Dozens of Israel’s leading fashion designers are emptying their racks for a cause as the Tel Aviv Sexual Assault Crisis Center returns to the Tel Aviv Port for its annual bazaar. Top-tier labels such as Galia Lahav, Ronen Chen, and Maya Bash have donated pieces to the fundraiser, turning the local fashion scene into a support network.

Every purchase helps fund the center’s emergency crisis intervention and advocacy services, ensuring continued assistance for the thousands who reach out each year.

May 7-9, from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., at *The Spot Hostel, Tel Aviv Port*. Entry: NIS 20 donation. For more information: 054-466-6327

## 9. MOONLIT MADNESS

A severed head, a ritualistic dance, and a princess who defies the codes of a collapsing patriarchy take center stage as the Israeli Opera revives Richard Strauss’s *Salome*. Based on Oscar Wilde’s provocative play, this production, directed by Itay Tiran, places the story within a stark, contemporary frame.

Conducted by Dan Ettinger and starring soprano Mary Elizabeth Williams, the performance traces the work’s descent into one of the most unsettling final scenes in the operatic repertoire.

May 8-18, *Shlomo Lahat Opera House, 19 Shaul Hamelech Blvd., Tel Aviv*. For more information and tickets: [www.israel-opera.co.il/show/salome](http://www.israel-opera.co.il/show/salome)

## 10. THE HEBREW NURSERY CLASSICS

A heartwarming production, *Ma Osot Ha’ayalot* (“What the deer do”), at the Israeli Opera invites children to experience the foundational songs of the Hebrew nursery in an operatic setting. By bringing the verses of Leah Goldberg, Miriam Yalan-Stekelis, and Ayin Hillel to the stage, the performance revives the characters and melodies that have shaped Israeli childhood for generations.

Set to music by composers such as Yoni Rechter and Naomi Shemer, the production creates a child-friendly environment, where the audience sits on carpets in the heart of the Opera House for an intimate encounter with these cultural classics.

May 9 at 11 a.m., *Shlomo Lahat Opera House, 19 Shaul Hamelech Blvd., Tel Aviv*. For more information and tickets: [www.israel-opera.co.il](http://www.israel-opera.co.il)

# Bountiful brunch with a bonus, at Piccolino

**RESTAURANT REVIEW**  
• ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN

When my daughter-in-law raved about the Friday brunch at Piccolino in downtown Jerusalem’s Music Square and urged me to review it, I went along happily enough but without high expectations.

Israeli breakfast-brunch buffets, whether in restaurants or hotels, are deservedly famous for being delicious and plentiful, but in a cookie-cutter kind of way. Salads, eggs, smoked fish, fresh breads and spreads, pastas and pizzas, and an assortment of desserts are standard. Seldom does one stand out from this excellent crowd. And for vegans like me, often these buffets offer little without dairy, fish, or eggs.

Piccolino surprised me – in a good way.

First, this Italian dairy eatery has a sweet story. It was opened 12 years ago by the legendary Nava Bibi, formerly the general manager of several upscale hotels and owner of the Little Jerusalem restaurant at Ticho House nearby, which was always a family affair. Following Bibi’s passing in 2019, Piccolino is co-owned by her daughters, Orit Dahan and Anat Yazdi. Yazdi’s husband, Roni, runs the kitchen.

Upon our visit, Dahan greeted us warmly and explained that when Piccolino debuted its Friday brunch eight years ago, business was slow. Then her niece, a soldier, told some lone soldiers about it. Word got around.

“Today we have 80 lone soldiers coming every Friday, including a lot of religious soldiers from the Netzah Yehuda Battalion. We give them a huge table outside. And they tell us they look forward to coming to Piccolino all week,” she said. “I never take vacation on Friday because I wait for them. They’re like my kids.” The soldiers pay nothing except a tip to the attentive and friendly waiters and waitresses.

Piccolino closed temporarily during the March war with Iran, mainly because many staffers were on reserve duty. Happily, it has now reopened.

The all-you-can-eat brunch, including one hot and one cold beverage, costs NIS 115 per person or NIS 130 per person for a group reserving a private room in the spacious restaurant.

Cheese tortellini in creamed mushroom sauce, assorted pizzas, colorful salads, and cheesecake are Piccolino’s most popular dishes. For vegan customers, the choices are ample: from salads, antipasti, gnocchi, and roasted vegetables to focaccia, vegan pizza with soy cheese, and artichoke ravioli, plus a luscious warm pecan pie – in addition to many gluten-free options. I cannot imagine anybody leaving Piccolino hungry or disappointed.

We started with plates piled high with leafy salads and tender roasted veggies. The gnocchi salad was outstanding, and a black lentil dish with greens was delicious. The artichoke ravioli tasted heavenly. I piled creamy guacamole onto a slice of whole-grain seeded bread, one of several options. I couldn’t manage more than two slices of the vegan thin-crust pizza brought to our table; the leftovers were packed up for the grandchildren, along with the rest of the pecan pie.

My daughter-in-law termed the salads “a joy,” and she adored Piccolino’s pesto dressing. That’s noteworthy because she usually finds any pesto unfavorable in comparison to her husband’s sublime version. She finished her meal with cheesecake, whose reputation is apparently well earned, and I had a few pieces of melon and orange after limiting my pie consumption to three bites.

Though I would have welcomed an option of freshly squeezed juice, there’s really nothing to criticize here; the food and the ambiance are excellent. Diners may choose a table amid the sounds of live music in the courtyard or in one of the cozy indoor rooms.

We will be back.



FRIDAY FARE at Piccolino. (Abigail Klein Leichman)

### Piccolino

12 Yoel Salomon St. (Kikar Hamusica)  
Jerusalem

Hours: Sun.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday buffet, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Tel: (02) 624-4186

Kashrut: Badatz Mehadrin Jerusalem

The writer was a guest of the restaurant.