

# Meet Dana: The Woman at the Forefront of Greenwich's Restaurant Industry

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Meet Dana Cifone, the Director of Operations and restaurateur extraordinaire, who is at the heart of Townhouse in Greenwich. She shares with us her journey in opening Townhouse, her love for food, and the biggest challenges and rewards that come with working in the hospitality industry.



**Please tell us a bit about your life in Greenwich (where you live, favorite activities, how long you have been here, etc.)?**

Greenwich offers a little of everything – history, art, culture, food, shopping and scenery. There is really no reason to leave town. I've been here since 2009 and Greenwich Avenue is one of my favorite places to stroll, walk Meeka, my 5 1/2 year-old shichon and join a friend or two for a lunch date.

**What do you love about Greenwich and your neighborhood?**

I spend most of my time at Townhouse these days and I love the historical aspects of the 4th Ward. We're close to The Ave but tucked away in a residential neighborhood. Greenwich has a very diverse group of residents from all over the world, which I love but it is the friendships that I've made that I cherish.

**Can you tell us a little bit about your career in hospitality – highlights and what drew you to the field?**

My heart is food and my love of hospitality can be traced back to my time working at the Riviera Bakehouse in high school. I always dreamed of opening a restaurant someday, so after receiving my BA from Salve Regina in Rhode Island, I landed a job with Starr Restaurants to open Buddakan and Continental in Atlantic City. After a few years of really honing my skills, I joined STK in NYC as a manager and was responsible for executing all special events. I had been working in the city for a few years and really was looking for a change. The opportunity to open a restaurant in Greenwich presented itself in 2009 and I never looked back.

**What led you to open Townhouse?**

In 2018, I was approached with a fresh opportunity for me to fulfill my lifelong dream of creating and growing a restaurant from scratch. I was tasked to conceptualize and design the concept for a new restaurant. Partnering with celebrated Chef Stephen Lewandowski created the perfect recipe for success, allowing us to open Townhouse and elevate the dining scene in Greenwich.

**What was the most challenging part of opening a restaurant?**

The most challenging part of opening Townhouse happened eight weeks after we served our first meal. Everyone's daily life changed, especially as it related to working and dining out, and we wanted to make sure Townhouse evolved with our guests, and we provided them more choice in how they wanted to enjoy their Townhouse favorites. We quickly implemented a take-away menu, gradually progressed to open outdoor seating and have utilized the restaurant space to make everyone feel comfortable dining indoors now.

**It's no secret the restaurant industry has fewer females in executive roles than maybe other industries, but that seems to be changing. What have you learned about yourself during your tenure as a restaurant exec?**

I am grateful I was able to find a career that spoke to my passion so early on. My

perseverance and experience throughout the years of working in a male dominated industry, only fueled my appetite to succeed and taught me that I could do anything and sit at the table with anyone. Fortunately, the look of leadership in our industry is evolving and I believe this is due to the strong, intelligent and successful women who are blazing a path for so many to follow.

**Can you share what separates Townhouse from other restaurants in the area?**

Townhouse offers an unparalleled dining experience with a seasonal menu in a beautiful setting. With multiple uniquely designed rooms, Townhouse offers different settings for lunch or dinner and private events.

**If you had to name just one (which I know will be hard), what is your favorite cocktail at Townhouse?**

To be honest, we have an impressive wine list and have earned our first Wine Spectator Award. So if I was going to order a drink, it would be a glass of wine.

**What is your favorite dish at Townhouse?**

Tough question! I've had so many incredible meals at Townhouse – but the Seared Sea Scallops have stuck with me. The scallops are so delicious, and moist and the incredible melting pot of flavors from the asparagus, shiitakes, pancetta, caramelized cauliflower, and truffle vinaigrette – I will always remember the first time I tasted it.

**If you had one piece of advice for someone opening a restaurant, what would it be?**

Don't do it! Seriously, my No. 1 tip for somebody to open their own restaurant is to be very passionate.

**What is your favorite part of your job?**

The moment when you look around a full dining room, packed with happy guests and a thriving, engaged team on both sides of the house, and you think, "I helped make this."

**Anything else you'd like to share?**

Couple of things: restaurant work teaches you to multitask at a very high level; working through the past couple of years has been a drain on everyone but we're still pushing through; and our teams' perseverance, loyalty, sense of humor, practical/technical skills, commitment to show up every night, grace under pressure and genuine love of hospitality makes Townhouse a success in the community.







**We love to support local businesses. What are your fave places locally to:**  
**Get coffee – Aux Delices**  
**Go on a date night – That’s a secret!**

**Go shopping – Saks**

**Go for fun during the day –Tod's Point**

**Go out for a girls night – I bring the party to Townhouse!**

**Get your hair done – Warren Tricomi**

**Get your nails done – Posh**