

What Started as a Family's Thank You to Minnesota Is Now a Six Year Readers' Choice Winner

Coccinella wins Gold for Best Specialty Store and Silver for Best Place to Buy a Gift in 2026 Minnesota's Best, its sixth straight year honored

EDINA, MN, UNITED STATES, August 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When the Kaplan family opened [Coccinella](#) Mediterranean Heritage in Edina, Minnesota, they wanted to share something with a community that had already given something important to them.

Years earlier, their sons had come to the United States for school. The warmth their family experienced from friends, teachers and families in Minnesota stayed with them. Coccinella grew from a simple desire to return some of that hospitality by sharing the food, craftsmanship and traditions of their Mediterranean home.

Six years of community recognition later, that small idea has taken root.



Coccinella storefront

Coccinella has earned Gold for Best Specialty Store and Silver for Best Place to Buy a Gift in the 2026 Minnesota's Best awards. The honors mark the sixth consecutive year the family owned store has been recognized by its Minnesota community.

Minnesota's Best, a Minnesota Star Tribune Readers' Choice Award program, drew nearly one million votes across 390 categories in 2026.

"For us, six years means much more than six awards seasons," said Umut Kaplan, Director of Business Development at Coccinella. "It means people came in, came back, brought their friends and families, and slowly made us part of their community. You cannot create that with a sign on a storefront. It happens one relationship at a time."

“Coccinella would not be what it is today without the care, energy and effort our team brings to the store every day,” said Seher Kaplan, Co-Founder and President of Coccinella. “They are an important part of why people feel at home when they walk through our doors, and an important part of this recognition.”

Located at 50th & France in Edina, Coccinella is not a traditional gift store. Its shelves tell the story of the family behind it, from Oleavia extra virgin olive oils produced in Türkiye to Aegean Breeze Turkish textiles and Mediterranean ceramics made by artisans the family knows and works with.

But some of the moments that have come to define the store cannot be found on a shelf.

They happen over an olive oil tasting, a cup of Turkish coffee or a conversation that lasts a little longer than expected.

That, the Kaplan family believes, is how a store becomes a community store.

“We are incredibly proud to call Edina home,” Kaplan said. “But we also hope someone in St. Paul, Woodbury or another part of Minnesota who has never walked through our doors sees this and becomes curious enough to visit us. There is always another cup of Turkish coffee.”

For a family whose journey began thousands of miles away, six consecutive years of recognition offers a quiet measure of how deeply those roots have grown in Minnesota.

And for those who have not yet discovered the little Mediterranean store at 50th & France, the family has a simple invitation: Come in and say hello.

About Coccinella Mediterranean Heritage

Coccinella Mediterranean Heritage is a family owned business located at 4946 France Avenue South in Edina, Minnesota. Founded in 2018, Coccinella was created to share the foods, craftsmanship and traditions of Mediterranean life with the community that welcomed the Kaplan family to Minnesota. The store is home to the family’s Oleavia specialty foods, Aegean Breeze Turkish textiles and a collection of Mediterranean ceramics and artisan pieces.

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