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The Gazette



Restaurant Elio Pizzeria

Only One Name to Remember !...

- for Elegant Receptions
- for Gastronomic Italian Cuisine
- for Impeccable Service



Un solo nome da ricordare !...

- Per un ricevimento di classe
- Per una cucina casa lingua italiana
- Per un servizio impeccabile

351 Bellechasse Montreal, Quebec Tel.:(514) 276-5341



A pizza maker with heart, Elio defied the odds

Elio Pizzeria defies the old adage that location, location, location is everything. Situated just one street east of St. Denis on Bellechasse, Elio's has managed to flourish in a concrete wasteland, surrounded by a drab bus depot and an even more drab gray office building.

Elio's is not a fancy restaurant. You won't find any chive tepees or swirls of sauce decorating your plate here. What you *will* find are the staple recipes that, since 1964, have kept Montrealers coming back again and again.

Pizza, spaghetti, rigatoni – that's the stuff they come for. And Elio De Lauri is only too happy to keep serving it up.

The sauces have been prepared by his own hand for nearly 40 years so you always know what you're getting. Sure he tinkers with the recipes, but he knows better than to mess with a good thing.

But the street! His friends said he would be closing his doors within a couple of years. No one goes down that street, they said. Did he listen?

No. It's so long ago now that Elio no longer even remembers why he chose that location.

But with just \$4,000 in capital, the price may have had something to do with it. Starting with just one small oven, De Lauri and his wife began what would be a lifetime of long hours and no rest, not even on Sundays.

De Lauri didn't even know how to cook back then. But he learned bit by bit. "I tried different things, always tasting, always trying to improve," he says.

And improve he did. The restaurant was an increasing success. From an initial four tables, De Lauri kept expanding his premises. Today, the restaurant seats up to 200 people. That's not including the two banquet halls, which add nearly another 400 seats.

The menu has also expanded over the years to include more than 100 delectable dishes such as cannelloni, lasagna, Bistecca ai carboni and Cotoletta alla Parmigiana. Of course the pizzas are still Elio's biggest sellers, as are the pastas, which come garnished

with a variety of different sauces – from the simple oil and garlic, to the famous Elio's Special Pink Sauce.

While that recipe is a secret, there's

no secret to Elio's success. "We use only the best ingredients and our food is all homemade, including the pasta," he says. "Nothing is frozen." At 67, he

still comes in every morning to personally prepare the sauces.

But providing great food isn't all De Lauri does. He is involved in fundraising activities that generate nearly \$100,000 a year in funds for various hospitals. He throws a big bash every New Year's Eve and he supplies all the food at his own expense. The proceeds are split among the Canadian Cancer Society, the Santa Cabrini Foundation and the Royal Victoria Hospital. Last year, the party netted more than \$20,000.

He also sponsors the Restaurant Elio Golf Tournament, usually held on the last Monday of May, which raised nearly \$25,000 this year for St. Mary's Hospital, the Jewish General and the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Why does he do it? Because in 1964, medical experts saved his father's life, free of charge. And he vowed that if he was ever in a position to help a hospital, he would.

As a pizza maker, De Lauri knows that what goes around, comes around.

– Rina Calabrese