



A LOOK AT SALERNO DAIRY

SALERNO: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

It all began in Salerno, Italy, a small town on the Amalfi coast. Warm weather. Sandy beaches. Medieval architecture.



Where great food included a vast selection of popular cheeses. And where teenager Carmine Marzaro had worked long days at a local cheese factory with the dream of a better life in Canada.

In 1959, he and his wife Marianna set out with their 6-year old daughter Anna,

leaving Salerno to create a new life and seek good fortune in Canada.

They first settled in Montreal where Carmine's parents and brothers lived. When the job search in their new city did not go well, they moved to Hamilton where Marianna's brothers worked; soon Carmine found a job at the local cheese factory, doing a job he knew well and he loved.

It was not long before he realized he knew more and had more experience making traditional Italian cheeses than his bosses. He was soon renting their equipment after hours and making products of his own.

By 1961, he launched his own company, Salerno Dairy, named after the beloved town he and Marianna had left behind.

And so, the family business was born: one that would see him dedicate long

hours with wife Marianna making cheese. Alongside, Marianna's brothers were taking care of sales. As daughters Anna and Barbara reached an age where they could contribute, in however small a way, they too became part of the dairy. It was a family atmosphere where everyone, including nephews and nieces, pitched in to work at the plant or take care of the kids. The family carried their ambition into the next generation, as the girls soon married and brought their husbands, then their children into the business.

Fifty three years later, what began as a teenager's love of cheesemaking in a small Italian town on the Mediterranean coast has evolved into a company with 185 employees making 47 varieties of traditional Italian cheese - a tribute to the entrepreneurial spirit and hard-working tradition of a man and his wife who saw their dreams come true.



Left: Founder Carmine Marzaro making cheese at Salerno Dairy



Right: Three generations of the Marzaro family on the far side of the photo: Carmine Marzaro, son-in-law Angelo Fidanza, and grandson Adrian Fidanza



MOST POPULAR TYPES OF CHEESE AT THE STORE?

Mozzarella, ricotta and casata friulano



There are no shortage of customers at the store around lunchtime. And those who come, are the regulars. The hot table has such great food!



A few samples from the Gos & Gris line of cheeses

THE GROWTH OF A BUSINESS

Salerno Dairy has always been a family business. From humble beginnings as a small factory producing a small number of cheese varieties, the company has expanded over the years to include a wide range of fascinating and interesting products. At first, a dozen employees, handmade traditions and manual order picking and loading that lasted well into the 1980s; after five decades, the business has grown to include automation, robots, modern technology and 185 employees.

The growth came across many avenues.

The first products made at the plant were mozzarella, ricotta, provolone and casata friulano. Over time, the lines were expanded to include bocconcini, mascarpone, peperonato, romanello and many more.

In 1988, Salerno purchased Gos & Gris,

located in nearby Hannon, adding goat's and sheep's milk cheeses to their popular lines.

In the same three-month period, they also opened the warehouse and distribution centre in Montreal and acquired a new property next to their location.

In the end, 47 varieties in dozens of flavours, shapes and packaging configurations to meet the demands of retail and foodservice customers. A total of over 28 acres, increasing the size of the original location ten-fold. Product lines made in-house and imported from Italy.

The demand went beyond what the dairy was producing to other types of cheese that could be brought in from Italy.

The Marzaro family soon found other opportunities outside the cheese

business; some of it was right at home in their store. As their Italian clientele grew, the decision was made to add other product lines. Over time ready-made frozen and fresh pasta and traditional Italian meats were added, along with espresso coffee, olive oils, beans and biscuits - everything Italian to meet the demands of their customers.



Sponsoring kids' sports team is also a part of Salerno's commitment to community. At left a local kids soccer team thanks them for their support.



UNIQUE CHEESES AT SALERNO

To the average person, whose knowledge of cheese doesn't go beyond square packages in the supermarket, the two most unique Salerno cheeses are probably the "caciocavallo" - cheese on horseback (*upper right*), and the "sette fette" - seven slices (*lower right*).

The caciocavallo is made using the stretched curd technique; it gets its name from the manner in which two cheeses were originally always tied together in a rope and dangled over a wooden board to drain and age. While the cheese is no longer strung up with rope on the rotating draining racks at Salerno, the cheese is still shaped in the traditional way and hung in pairs to age.

Meanwhile, below the caciocavallo, the "sette fette" - seven slices - also hangs in pairs. The twine leaves it carefully scored so it can easily be cut into large slices for serving.



ONE-STOP PIZZA SHOP

The tower of canned tomatoes in the warehouse is eye-catching. It makes you wonder what they have to do with cheese or dairy products.

In fact, they are a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit at Salerno. As the list of pizzeria customers grew, it became apparent that there was a need for a supplier who could bring them one-stop shopping. And so, the sales team found a way to source everything they could possibly need. From mozzarella to tomatoes, from spices to boxes, it satisfied the needs of a niche market that has added to the growth of Salerno Dairy.



1.



2.



6.

salernodairy.com



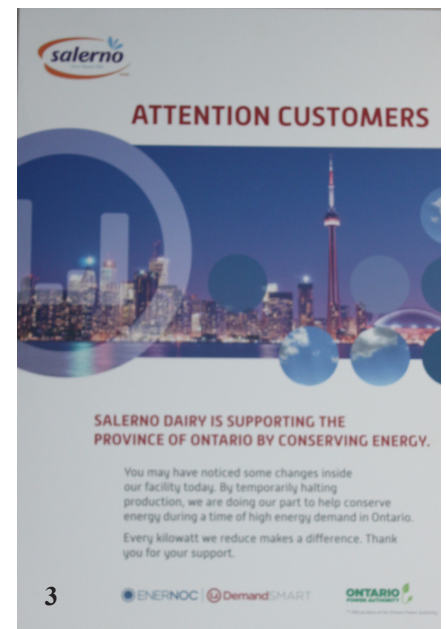
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(clockwise from top)

1. Skids of Salerno tomatoes for pizzeria customers
2. Lots of work but time to greet us!
3. Among its environmental efforts, Salerno is online with the local hydro company. When the demand for energy peaks, they look to see what they can shut down to lower demand on the grid.
4. Cheese and more of Salerno's great cheese
5. 20 Morley St., where it all began
6. It's always a good time for cheese!



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THE BIRTH OF THE STORE

For Anna Fidanza, it is a lifetime of Salerno memories. Her earliest one, two years into her life in Canada. Her mother and father leaving at 3 a.m. to receive the milk. Her uncles also helping: one developing a sales route down the Niagara peninsula; the other in towards Toronto.

When she finished high school, her dad had a job for her. After several years of customers arriving unannounced

when they needed cheese, Carmine had decided it was time to open a small retail store beside the factory.

In the beginning, the store had more of a homemade feel. The ricotta was wrapped in parchment; the mozzarella in a plastic bag because customers ate it that same day.

While Anna soon moved into the main office area to take charge of HR responsibilities, she is proud of how much the store has grown since that opening summer. Now more than three times the size, it sells all varieties of Salerno cheese in all their configurations: sliced, packaged or waxed; in tubs, wheels or buckets; bulk, shredded, grated or hand- or machine-molded.

In addition to Salerno and imported cheese, the store also sells a vast array of Italian products: everything from olives and pasta to cookies, spices and espresso coffee.

When you enter the store, the first thing you will notice is the delicious smell of Italian food. A steady lunchtime clientele arrive every day for their lunchtime favorite, made fresh onsite.

All in all, a great shopping opportunity for the avid Italian foodie!

A WORK ETHIC ACROSS GENERATIONS

Carmine and Marianna Marzaro arrived in Canada with a dream of creating a good life for their family. And from the moment the Salerno Dairy was founded, their strong work ethic and determination never faltered.

Husband and wife worked side by side, starting at 3 a.m., receiving the milk and starting the days of cheesemaking. When their daughters Anna and Barbara were old enough to contribute in their own way, they tagged along to help out at the dairy.

As a 7-year old, Barbara rode the delivery route to Niagara with her uncle, soon writing down orders and filling in invoices. Once she was older, she was allowed to help with the simpler cheesemaking tasks: straining the friulano cheese with cheesecloth; washing the ricotta molds; cleaning and waxing the wheels of cheese. After high school, she took over responsibilities in the accounting department.

Carmine believed a good production manager should know everything about the cheese business. When son-in-law Angelo first started at the plant, he was sent directly into the cheesemaking area. Eventually, he worked his way through other areas, well-schooled in all aspects of Salerno Dairy, until the responsibility of production was his.

The same fate awaited son-in-law Dino, who arrived in Hamilton with past experience in sales. He too started on the production floor. Over the years he worked hard in all areas of the business, eventually finding his way to head

up the sales team, where he remains today.

When Carmine passed away in 1990, he left behind a strong and capable family, trained first in all areas of the business, then set up in duties well-divided: Angelo in Production; Anna in HR; Dino in Sales and Purchasing; Barbara in Finance. But they never forgot the lessons of a traditional Italian cheese maker: that to be successful, everyone must pitch in wherever they are needed.

His wife Marianna took over the role of president when Carmine was gone, a position she held until she died in 2013. And her family will always remember how proud she was to carry on the business she and her husband had built together.



Proud grandpa Carmine Marzaro with namesake granddaughter Carmen Fidanza who continues to work at the Salerno plant.