

TEMPO

Ideas for today's active lifestyles

A family place

Muriale's Restaurant has become a part of our very fabric

BY KATIE WILSON
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FAIRMONT — It's difficult to imagine dining in North Central West Virginia without Muriale's Restaurant. After 40 years, Muriale's has become a part of the very fabric of Marion County.

In the summer of 1969, brothers Sam and Frank Muriale opened the restaurant as a way to be their own boss. With the help of their wives and family recipes, they opened the restaurant. It was one room with 36 seats, said Rocco Muriale, Frank's son who now owns the business. The restaurant was located on U.S. Route 250 south of Fairmont, the same location it occupies today.

"We've been able to add on whenever we needed," Muriale said. "This location has always been great."

The additions encompass several rooms, a wine closet, bar and banquet rooms.

When the restaurant first opened, Rocco Muriale was a freshman in college and his younger brother was 13. Rocco took over the business when his father and uncle could no longer continue. Both are deceased now — Sam Muriale died in 1978 before the restaurant began expanding. His father Frank died in 1998.

"I think they'd be pleased," Rocco Muriale said. "My uncle saw the restaurant had roots and would do well before he died. I think he'd be pleased with the growth."

Family is one thing that's been important at Muriale's from the very beginning. After 40 years, generations of families have come through the doors.

"We have lots of staff that have moved on and now they come in with their children," Muriale said. "It's interesting to see the changes. I also have young people working here that I remember them coming in and sitting in high chairs."

Part of what makes Muriale's special is the rich history. That history begins with the menu and the tradi-

tions inside it. The fabulous red sauce and the famous Italian dressing are recipes created by Muriale's grandmother. The restaurant has always used them and always will, he said.

The family atmosphere brings families in to share good food. There are hundreds of photos and other memorabilia on the walls, including Muriale family photos. Being able to make people happy with the restaurant brings Muriale a great amount of joy and pride, he said.

"I'm really happy," Muriale said. "We're always building on the layers of the previous years, the quality of the food, the culture of service. We're going to continue that, the focus on the food and Italian menu items."

The culture of service is another part of what makes Muriale's special. It starts with Muriale himself, who works at the restaurant every day.

"You've gotta be here. You must be a presence and stay on top of things," Muriale said. "We have a good staff. The foundation for the staff was laid in the early 1970s with quality service and quality food."

The secret, Muriale said, is training the staff well, then expecting the best. The staff will perform at the level you expect them to, he said.

"If excellence was easy, then everyone would be," Muriale said. "We're always looking to do more, to make sure each guest has an enjoyable dining experience."

There are some changes coming to Muriale's in the next year. Muriale said he plans to remodel the interior of the restaurant over the next year.

"It's time to get the restaurant ready for the next 10 to 20 years," he said.

Also, the restaurant is always expanding its catering and banquet business.

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Rocco Muriale proudly holds photos of his father, Frank, one of the founders of Muriale's Restaurant. Family photos adorn many of the walls in the restaurant.



There's been a lot of growth at Muriale's Restaurant, which began with one room 40 years ago. One of those additions is the bar area.

PHOTOS BY DANNY SNYDER



In addition to family photos, there's a lot of memorabilia hanging on the walls of the restaurant, including one of Mary Lou Retton's leotards, autographed, of course, by the iconic Fairmont native.



Perfect for family dining, Muriale's Restaurant is an institution in Marion County.