

**F**or Angelo's Pizza in Berlin and Sal Cusumano, the restaurant business is the family business.

Cusumano is a third-generation owner of the successful restaurant chain, which has four stores—two in Mount Laurel, one in Riverside and one in Berlin, the latter of which Cusumano owns and operates.

"Angelo's is a family tradition that started with my grandfather in the late '60s," Cusumano says. "I am the first generation of my family to live in America. My parents were born in Sicily in the same town, Carini, and met in Medford, actually. My father followed my grandfather's footsteps, and so have I."

But Cusumano, a Rowan University graduate, took a roundabout way back to the family business.

"It was always in the back of my mind, a Plan B," he says of returning to Angelo's. "I went to Rowan, got a communications degree, did a couple internships in communications. I ended up being a salesman for the cheese company I use now, helping other pizza restaurants get better, and I said to myself, 'I am wasting my time driving all over God's creation when I could be doing this myself.'" So in 2012, he bought an existing business, changed it over to Angelo's Pizza and another brand of the family business was born.

Today, he couldn't imagine doing anything else.

"I love what I do, [and] I wouldn't change a thing. I have known this was my calling ever since I was a 2-year-old wearing my grandfather's pizza shirt. I take pride in what I do. And it's a responsibility I am honored to pursue and carry on my grandfather and father's dream and grow it to new heights."

Still, Cusumano widely credits his uncles, Rich and Pino Cusumano and Nino Randazzo; his cousin Tony Sparacio, the co-owner of Riviera pizza in Medford Lakes; his father, Tony Cusumano; his sister, Josephine and his mother, Francesca with his success; as well as his grandfather Sal—also his namesake.



PROMOTION

# All in the Family

*Angelo's Pizza Berlin owner Sal Cusumano on running the family business, his plan of action and how his family helped him succeed.*

"A huge part to our success here at the Berlin location is that my mother and father helped me get [on] my feet when I first took over. My father had all the experience and his advice helped lay the foundation that Angelo's works off," he explains. "Growing up in the business, I learned valuable lessons working alongside my grandfather and uncles. A lot of credit goes to my mother. She developed all the soup recipes that we serve at the Berlin location; and it's that homemade taste my customers have learned to love and expect when they walk in the door."

And Francesca has become somewhat of a fixture at the Berlin location. "There's not a day that goes by where someone is asking me 'Where's Mom?' or 'How's Mom?'" Cusumano says. "I've also received proposals for my mother's hand in marriage, but she's taken; just don't tell my Dad. Overall, she's been my rock through the tough times and has always been my biggest fan."

He's also incorporated some successful new ideas into Angelo's in Berlin, such as the Angelo Way, a guidebook of sorts to the family business' goals, standards, and ultimately, success.

"That's the core of how we operate," he says. "I developed the plan five years ago, and when I took over my own restaurant, I was

able to break it down, put it on paper and make it [applicable]. It took two years to get it instilled [at Angelo's Pizza] in Berlin, and we keep building off it, growing on it. Once you get hired, you have to buy in." Part of the restaurant's success and how they do things is having managers set the tone and serve as a positive example of how things are done to other employees, Cusumano explains.

Cusumano also introduced some other changes to the business, including developing Instagram and Facebook accounts for the business.

Angelo's also makes it a point to give back to the community, doing work for the Ronald McDonald House in Camden and the Berlin Community School, where they will this year give the Giuseppe Randazzo Leadership Award to the most deserving 8th grader, an award named after Cusumano's maternal grandfather, whom he also credits for his success.

But one thing hasn't changed—and that's the pizza.

"Our pizza comes down to the recipe. It's passed down from my grandfather and it's over 50 years old. And it's all about the quality ingredients we put into it—the cheese, the dough, the sauce; it's all top of the line. That's basically what created all this," he says. "It's never really been tweaked. The pizza was a staple."

"My grandfather opened [Riccardo's] in Wilingboro after he moved from Brooklyn, so a lot of people might remember that," he continues. "The recipe has been passed down to my father and now to me. The reason why we have four stores today is because of the pizza. That gave us the start and that's what continues to make us successful into the next century."

And after 2 1/2 years in business, Cusumano has continued to employ the same motto that inspired him to chase his dreams.

"You can either dream about it or you can go out and make it happen," he says. ■