

suburbanlife



**Also
Inside:**
Summer camps,
wealth planning,
and more



Luigi & Giovanni's
celebrates a storied
tradition of Italian
heritage and cuisine.

page 70



Luigi & Giovanni's celebrates a storied tradition of Italian heritage and cuisine.

Renaissance Fare

by **LEIGH STUART** | photography by **JODY ROBINSON**

As an authentic Italian market, butcher shop, award-winning caterer, and neighborhood grocer, Luigi & Giovanni's has been bringing the best of Italy to Delaware and Chester counties for nearly half a century.

"It all comes from roots," says proprietor John D'Alessandro.

Indeed, in a restaurant landscape where high-volume chain restaurants abound, family-owned gems such as Luigi & Giovanni's are rare finds. Dedicated to quality and craftsmanship in all their dishes, eateries such as this one shine as an example of a philosophy that many might forget in the modern world—that hard work, passion, and sincerity tend to yield the finest cuisine.

"We've evolved over the years," says Laneeta Byrd, bookkeeper. "We're always trying to reinvent the wheel with new and inventive concepts, while at the same time keeping true to Italian tradition."

D'Alessandro, who also goes by Giovanni, operates the enterprise alongside business partner Luigi Lemme. A native of the coastal Abruzzo region of Italy, Lemme has brought a personal passion for culture and tradition to the shop since its inception in 1976. As D'Alessandro shares, Lemme has a passion for all things related to food, from gift baskets to meaty favorites such as *arrosticini*, or grilled lamb skewers. He's also a talented butcher.

"Everybody does everything here," D'Alessandro adds. "I'm an owner, but I can sweep the floor and take out the trash. We have chefs from all different backgrounds, and I learn a lot from my team."

Custom gift baskets to suit any palate or budget can feature any of a gamut of products, from Italian imports to USDA prime cut meats to house-cured meats and international cheeses. Ready-made offerings including house-made dishes allow busy parents a much-needed shortcut to providing their family a satisfying meal. Take-home entrées offer the ultimate convenience in family meal prep, as fresh, uncooked dishes are seasoned, garnished, and packaged in oven-ready pans. Even novice cooks can excel with these, as the package includes cooking instructions.

"So many people, even though they cook at home, like our convenient takeout options," says D'Alessandro. "It's a very big part of our business, I think because people like the good quality and fair price. We really want people to know that when they take home our food, it was made special. We want people to let our family be a part of their family."

One need only visit the Luigi & Giovanni's website to see evidence of Lemme's experience as a caterer, as well as a purveyor and butcher of quality meats. From veal, lamb, and pork chops to turkey and beef burgers, the "discriminating meat lover" can find a



porchetta *Abruzzese*—a whole pig, roasted and boneless. This favorite for special occasions features meat flavored with fresh herbs and rotisserie roasted in a brick oven, a means that provides crispy, crackling skin and juicy meat for a one-of-a-kind experience. Half-cuts are also available; these feature a vertically cut pig, laid on its side to preserve tenderness and the “wow” factor for which this dish is known.

Also, seafood is a staple here, just as it is in Abruzzo. Specialty seafood dinners feature *fruits de mer* such as cod, flounder, salmon, shrimp, branzino, and more.

Party specials also include whole boneless veal roast, poached salmon, filet mignon (stuffed with sundried tomatoes and cheese or herb-roasted) and even steamship roast beef (a whole bovine round, or hindleg, that includes top, bottom, and eye round sections). Specialty turkeys are boneless, baked in a brick oven, and packed with a bread and herb stuffing.

Besides serving residents of Delaware and Chester counties, Luigi & Giovanni’s “takes the show on the road.” The family-run business takes

great pride in bringing its authentic Italian flavors to fetes and festivals across the region.

“Not last year, of course, but previously, we served a St. Anthony’s Italian festival that had more than 75,000 to 80,000 visitors in a week,” D’Alessandro says. “We like being part of the local community, and we like supporting other local businesses, too. We want to see everyone do well—that’s what it’s all about.” ■

protein to suit at the shop, and all for a reasonable price. Filet mignon, New York strip, and rib-eye steaks, all USDA choice beef, as well as sausages of all kinds and Italian favorites such as pork and beef braciole (thinly sliced meat topped with savory stuffing and rolled) round out the offerings.

A true classic standout is the




Luigi & Giovanni's
 3601 Chapel Road | Newtown Square, PA 19073
 (610) 353-2080 | luigiandgiovannicaterers.com

