



[\[Print\]](#) [\[Close\]](#)

Sausage-making gives family a link to the past

Shawn Clubb
Of the Suburban Journals
Southwest City Journal
Wednesday, May. 04 2005

Into the grinder go quality cuts of meat, which are then hand mixed with pistachios and other ingredients of this month's specialty sausage — Provencal pistachio.

The whole mix then goes into casings and is hand-twirled into links at Manzo's kitchen.

"Food that's handmade — it's cultural and it's a link to our past," said Pete Manzo of Manzo Foods, which this year is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Pete and his brother, Paolo "Paul" Manzo, have carried on the tradition of their parents, Pietro and Brigida Manzo, who founded Manzo Importing in 1955 on Franklin Avenue. They moved the business in 1969 to its current location at 5346 Devonshire Ave.

Pietro Manzo died in 1998, but his sons have continued the business, which includes Manzo's Kitchen, where they make salsiccia; a supermarket with imported ethnic foods; an import/wholesale business; and more recently Manzo's Take-out, a sandwich shop.

To honor the 50th anniversary of the business, Manzo's has been offering a monthly specialty sausage that has been made available exclusively to people on their mailing list. So far, they have made kalamata olive and feta sausage in January, garlic sausage in February, Polish sausage in March, and Provencal pistachio in April.

The Provencal pistachio was made last Friday for distribution on Saturday and is already sold out. May's sausage is Asiago and parsley salsiccia.

"While salsiccia is our specialty, it's not the only thing we can do," Pete Manzo said. "We want people to know we're the best sausage, not just the best Italian sausage."

If he sounds confident in the quality of sausage made at Manzo's, it's with good reason. He said the business prides itself on using quality meat and hand mixing the ingredients. His parents made all of the sausages by hand.

"Even though we have machinery now, you still need personal supervision of the formula and the quality of the meat. You can't do that mechanically," he said. "I think my dad would be proud of both of us — Paul and I."

Manzo's specialty is the traditional salsiccia. He said at one point after they opened Manzo's Kitchen, a man kept coming in and buying up a certain kind of their salsiccia. He said the man later told him it was for J. Kim Tucci, the president of Pasta House Restaurants. He said the Pasta House later started buying salsiccia for its restaurants from Manzo's, even though the cost for Manzo's salsiccia is more expensive than other salsiccia.

A USDA inspector watches the sausage making whenever it is being made for wholesale sale, Manzo said.

The business also makes an extra special salsiccia, a spicy salsiccia and a

Tuscan salsiccia with sun-dried tomatoes, provolone and pepperoncini peppers among its ingredients.

Paul Manzo said the supermarket has changed over the years, first to account for the changing ethnic backgrounds in the neighborhood and later to provide more ready-to-eat foods.

From the start, it provided Italian foods, but also Greek foods for the local Greek population. When Bosnians immigrated to the area, the market carried foods for them, but now they have their own markets. Now, Manzo's carries Albanian foods for the Albanians that have moved into the neighborhood.

Pete Manzo said the business started offering take-out sandwiches last year after inquiries by customers. He said his father had at one time sold dollar sandwiches to people who would stop by while walking to the nearby Buder Elementary School.

Now the store offers sandwiches for sale from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays in April through September. During the other months of the year, Manzo's is too busy with orders for traditional foods for the holidays.

Pete Manzo said their signature sandwich is the Manzo's Muffuleta, made with Italian meats and cheese on their own recipe muffuleta bread. He said the bread is made locally at a Bosnian bakery.

Anyone wanting to learn more about Manzo Foods should call 353-5332 or visit the web site at www.manzoimporting.com. People visiting the web site may also sign up for the mailing list there and be eligible to buy the specialty sausages this year.

Log on to St. Louis At Work to find the most local jobs.
Sign up to receive e-mails when new job listings match your criteria.
Learn more here. <http://www.stltoday.com/jobs>

If you enjoy reading about interesting news, you might like the 3 O'Clock Stir from STLtoday.com. Sign up and you'll receive an email with unique stories of the day, every Monday-Friday, at no charge.
Sign up at <http://newsletters.stltoday.com>
