

Historical Highlights

Tosi's Restaurant specializes in northern Italian cuisine and is widely renowned for the consistently high quality of its food and drink, warm hospitality and authenticity of its Italian dishes.

The restaurant is housed in a large, rambling building surrounded by Italian gardens and imported Roman statues that sits on ten acres of land located on the western shore of Lake Michigan in Stevensville, Michigan, just 90 miles east of Chicago, and less than two miles away from exit 23 on I-94

75 Years Old

Tosi's roots go back to 1938 when Anthony Tosi and his wife, Henrietta, opened a small summer resort in Stevensville to serve the Italian community of Cicero, Illinois. The resort had eight small cabins and a large common hall and was open from Memorial Day through Labor day to visitors from the Chicago area seeking the sun and sand of Lake Michigan and the special taste of Grandma Tosi's exceptional northern Italian food.



1938 - Resort Del Lago on Ridge Road.
The beginning of Tosi's Restaurant

Long before outdoor grilling became a national passion, Grandma Tosi was cooking many of her meat dishes over open coals. She also served homemade pastas and home-grown herbs and vegetables, including zucchini squash so she could harvest the blossoms for fiori di zucca fritti (fried zucchini blossoms), a longtime Tosi's favorite still served in season.

It wasn't long before local citizens heard about the good food being served over on Ridge Road in Stevensville and began stopping by to see if "Nonna" (Grandma Tosi) might be willing to serve meals to "locals."

Enter Emil Tosi



*Henrietta & Anthony Tosi on their wedding day.
Parents of Emil Tosi.*

Grandma Tosi declined, saying she already had all the work she could handle. But her son, Emilio, knew a good thing when he saw it, and so, in 1948, Tosi's Restaurant, a full-fledged eating establishment with room for 100 diners, opened to the public. The menu featured many of Grandma Tosi's favorites plus several more dishes created by Emilio himself.

Under Emil, Tosi's energetic and creative leadership, Tosi's Restaurant prospered and grew, with major additions in 1955, 1960 and 1964 that increased seating capacity from 100 to its present 280. Each addition was lavishly decorated with antiques and various works of art brought back from Italy by Emil Tosi on his many trips back to the land of his ancestors.

One of the Best in America

The restaurant widely known for the quality of its service and authentic northern Italian cuisine. In 1965, was named by Time Magazine as "one of 22 restaurants (in the U.S.) well worth the trip." And in 1997, Tosi's was one of only 2,052 restaurants worldwide to be listed in Wine Spectator magazine's 1997 Annual Guide To Great Wine Lists and Distinguished Dining Establishments!

New Owners

In 1973, Emil decided it was time to retire and sold his restaurant to Herman Berghoff, a member of the famous Berghoff family, well-known Chicago restaurateurs. Berghoff owned and operated the restaurant, maintaining both the original staff and menu, for the next ten years before selling it in 1983 to Charles and Ginger Mostov of St. Louis. Ginger Mostov was an accomplished chef, having operated the kitchen at Duff's, a St. Louis restaurant well-known for its French cuisine. Charles was an attorney with a warm personality and promotional flair that worked very nicely in the front of the house.



World Class Wine Cellar



Orville Ruff
Head Chef 1962-1997

Tosi's Restaurant continued to flourish under the direction of the Mostovs, and in 1986, was cited by Wine Spectator magazine as having one of the finest restaurant wine lists in the world. Tosi's currently maintains a wine cellar with over 120 different wines from all over the world.

Authenticity Pursued with a Passion

The Mostovs also continued the Tosi tradition of visiting Italy on a regular basis to study the local cuisine and area restaurants to acquire new recipes and cooking techniques for the Tosi's kitchen. And in May, 1986, the Mostovs broke new ground by taking 21 employees to Italy to visit some of the finest restaurants, trattorias and vineyards in northern Italy, and work along side some of the finest chefs in that part of Europe.

Ownership Expanded

In 1987, the Mostovs, wishing to move to California, offered house manager Marge Wiatrowski and chef Gary Manigold the opportunity to become co-owners of the restaurant with them and take on the chore of day-to-day management. The offer was accepted and for the next nine years, Wiatrowski and Manigold, as co-owners, operated the restaurant on a full-time basis, with Mrs. Mostov returning each summer to work along side Chef Manigold in the kitchen.

A Second Venture: Caffe Tosi

In 1993, Marge Wiatrowski and her husband, Arnie, Gary Manigold and Ginger Mostov opened a second restaurant, Caffe Tosi, in downtown St. Joseph, a small city just a few miles north of Stevensville. It was an immediate success and today, although no longer owned by Tosi's Restaurant, is one of St. Joseph's favorite eating places. Described by its owners as an Italian deli, Caffe Tosi specializes in fine coffees and "upscale" fast food items.



The Tosi's Torch Is Passed Again

On March 1, 1996, Marge Wiatrowski and Gary Manigold purchased the balance of the business from Ginger Mostov and became equal partners and co-owners of Tosi's Restaurant. Both vowed to maintain long-standing Tosi's traditions of quality food and drink, warm hospitality and authentic Italian cuisine.

Wiatrowski, a native of Northville, Mich., joined Tosi's in 1968 as a cocktail server and a few months later was promoted to waitress. She remained with the restaurant when Emil Tosi sold it in 1973. In 1984, then owners Charles and Ginger Mostov asked her to work the front desk one or two nights a week, and soon after promoted her to front-of-the-house manager.

Manigold began working in the Tosi's kitchen in 1983 as one of several cooks under Ginger Mostov. Raised in nearby Three Oaks, Mich., Manigold has worked in the restaurant business since he was 12 years old. He was named Tosi's executive chef in 1993.

Major Improvements Made By New Owners

Since taking over, the new owners have made several major improvements to the restaurant. In 1996, they converted the restaurant's Florentine Room into the Florentine Grill, complete with authentic Italian wood burning oven, and completely renovated the restaurant's Italian courtyard, including installation of a walled exterior and all new landscaping.

In the spring of 1997, they completely rebuilt the restaurant's screened-in patio and renamed it the Saraceno Veranda. The veranda features an authentic Italian balustrade and columns. Also added in 1997 was Emil's Hideaway, an intimate cigar smoking lounge located on the second floor of the restaurant in what used to be Emil Tosi's apartment.

Most recently, in the spring of 1998, a major renovation of the restaurant's upper level dining rooms was completed. Under the direction of Sam Rosenberg, one of America's finest and best known architectural designers, they were literally transformed by into a small piece of northern Italy, named, appropriately, the Cortina and Tuscany Rooms.

Large French-style doors and windows all around ... hand-hewn wooden ceiling beams ... new lighting and carpeting ...

comfortable new chairs ... carved wooden chandeliers ... and soft, country colors ... all blend together to create a warm, inviting atmosphere.

Equally important, the larger of the two rooms, the Tuscany Room, can seat up to 200 people ... or be divided into three separate, sound-proofed rooms for private parties.

Tosi's Founder Dies

Emilio Garibaldi Tosi, founder of Tosi's Restaurant, died peacefully in his sleep Saturday, July 17, 1999. He was 84 years old and had been in failing health for some time. But his legacy, Tosi's Restaurant, one of the finest dining establishments in America, lives on.



Emilio Garibaldi Tosi was born to Anthony and Henrietta Tosi February 12, 1915, in Cicero, Illinois. In 1938, the family moved to Stevensville, Michigan and opened a small summer resort that catered primarily to Italian friends and acquaintances from the Cicero area. One of its main attractions was Grandma Tosi's marvelous Italian cooking, which she prepared exclusively for her summer guests.

In 1948, Emil purchased the business from his parents and opened Tosi's Restaurant, featuring many of his grandmother's recipes. Over the next 25 years, under his energetic guidance, Tosi's Restaurant nearly tripled in size and became known as one of the best restaurants in the Midwest. Emil Tosi sold the restaurant in 1973 and retired from active participation in the business. Thanks to the solid foundation he created, Tosi's Restaurant is still in business today and continues to rank as one of America's finest dining establishments.

Upon his passing, the employees of Tosi's Restaurant, both past

and present, published the following eulogy to honor their longtime friend:

"In remembrance ... the employees of Tosi's ... both past and present ... wish to express their sadness on the passing of Emil Tosi, who first opened his family's restaurant in 1948. It didn't matter to Emil that the restaurant was located off the beaten path. "You can build a restaurant in a swamp and if you serve good food, people will find you," he once said ... and that was so true.

"Under Emil's creative leadership, Tosi's grew in size ... from the original capacity of 100 to 280 as it is today ... and also achieved national fame, being named "one of 22 restaurants (in the U.S.) well worth the trip" by Time Magazine in 1966 and, more recently, was one of only 2052 restaurants worldwide to be listed in Wine Spectator Magazine's 1997 Annual Guide to Great Wine Lists and Distinguished Dining Establishments. The restaurant also was featured in a recent front page Chicago Sun-Times food section article because Tosi's still features some of the same dishes on its menu ... including Grandma Tosi's chicken cacciatore ... that it served when it first opened, a rarity in today's hurly burly restaurant world.

"But Emil shouldn't be remembered just for his ability to create and maintain a high quality restaurant that has flourished for over 50 years. He was kind to everyone who worked for him, and though he sold the restaurant in 1973, the staff still remembers him fondly and with admiration. Marge Wiatrowski, who worked for Emil as a waitress some 31 years ago, now owns the restaurant along with her husband, Arnie, and co-owner and executive chef, Gary Manigold. Out of respect for Emil, Marge and Gary often asked Emil to stop by and talk to diners ... just as he used to do when owned the restaurant ... to help carry on the valued Tosi tradition. He will be missed by all who knew him."

New Management Team

Gary Manigold, co-owner and executive chef since 1987, has sold his interest in the restaurant to Marge and Arnie Wiatrowski and moved to Chicago. We will miss Gary; he was a fine chef and a good friend whose steady hand and great talents contributed mightily to the growth and success of Tosi's Restaurant. We wish him well.

Replacing Gary was our next executive chef was Ryan Thornburg , formerly sous chef at the Bistro On The Boulevard in St. Joseph. Ryan was born and raised in nearby Watervliet. Following his graduation from Lake Michigan College, where he earned an associate's degree in culinary arts, he worked with Chef Manigold in our kitchen from 1992 to 1996. Ryan will be responsible for managing all aspects of our kitchen operation. We are delighted to have Ryan back with us.**

Longtime front-of-the-house personality Dan McCrery has been named house manager and will be responsible for managing all aspects of the business associated with the front of the house, including the serving staff and bar operations. Dan joined us in 1989, right after graduating from St. Joseph High School, and has been an integral part of the organization ever since. He looks forward to serving you all in the future.

Finally, Marge Wiatrowski, owner of the business and associated with it since 1968, has officially donned the mantle of general manager — a job she says she hopes will let her spend more time with her husband and grandchildren. We hope your wish comes true, Marge; but we're not going to bet on it.

*****Ryan Thornburg is no longer associated with Tosi's Restaurant; we wish him well.***

Our Fourth Major Renovation



We made a number of major improvements to our restaurant ... all designed to enhance the Tosi's dining experience. Completed in January 2002 (while we were closed), they include:

A handsome new and enlarged front entrance and reception area;

Handicapped access (no more ramps);

Completely remodeled and larger rest rooms for both ladies and gents;

A bigger lounge and new chairs at the bar;

New service passages that provides handicapped access to the main floor of the restaurant and lets our staff serve patrons in the Florentine Room and on the Veranda without going through the lobby!



New Logo

We want to call your attention to our new logo, based on the exterior of our new entryway, and created for us by local artist Matt Payovich. We thought it was about time for a new look ... and we're mighty pleased with it. Look for it on our wine bottle labels and various gift items ... and in our advertising, too. No changes to the signature, though; some things are just too good to change!



Porte Cochere

Our covered valet parking, Porte Cochere, was completed in 2005 which complimented the renovations done in 2002.

In Memory of Arnie Wiatrowski

November, 2006, we lost a wonderful husband, father, co-worker and friend with the passing of Arnie Wiatrowski, co-owner with his wife, Marge, of Tosi's Restaurant ... and for many years, our front desk host. All of us at Tosi's wish to express sincere thanks for the overwhelming outpouring of condolences - cards, flowers, letters - from friends all over the country. They've been a great comfort to Marge and her family during these difficult times.



Moving Forward in the 21st Century

With our first ever Point of Sale Computer System that went live on Monday May 12, 2013. Pictured with the new system are Tosi owners (from right to left) Dan McCrery, Lori McCrery, and Amy Paulin with her husband Jim Paulin