

Valentino's Story

Mr. Spadafora started the restaurant with eight partners back in April 1978. Only one of these eight partners had café experience working in Italy. Valentino's started off as a bakery and a hot table establishment. Overtime half of it turned into a restaurant. The significance of Valentino's is that it was one of the first Italian restaurants in Hamilton, especially to offer panzerotti. There are two current locations of Valentino's, one in downtown Hamilton and one on Hamilton East Mountain. The name for the establishment came from an uncle that loved silent films by Rudolph Valentino.

The menu includes their well-known panzerottis as well as homemade lasagna, pizza, different pasta dishes, and a Valentino salad that compares to a deluxe sandwich but without the bun. This has been their most popular dish as of recent. The family immigrated from Calabria and the food offered reflects the region in Italy, as the owner's son states, "it is total Calabrese style." The older menu included items such as hamburgers and fries because the owners feared people would not be attracted to Italian food, thus tried to offer different foods to cater to a wider clientele. Most ingredients, such as sauce, are made in the house. The family has not changed their menu much but to remain modern they have renovated their establishment to keep up with the times.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected most small businesses globally, and at Valentino's they found the frozen lasagnas they started to offer before the pandemic helped them throughout province wide closures. Like many establishments, Valentino's has offered take-out throughout the pandemic which has helped them survive as a business. In addition, they had opened an online store for customers to purchase goods for pickup.

Paul Spadafora, the owner's son, claims what sets Valentino's apart from other businesses is that they are homemade and handmade. The dough, sauce, and everything else is homemade at Valentino's which contributes to their high-quality food.

If you do visit Valentino's, the manager suggests trying their lasagna, panzerotti, and any of their homemade desserts!