

San Remo Rustico Story

Chef Roberto Silvestri immigrated to Canada in 1963, where he would raise a family of five children. It was quite difficult to make a living to support his family and this led him to establish San Remo in 1977. Later, Rustico was added to the name in order to reflect Roberto's capabilities to bring his rustic Italian recipes to Canada. His children and wife, Vincenza Silvestri, helped him run the restaurant in order to make ends meet. Chef Roberto is now 85 years old and has ran the restaurant together with his wife Vincenza for over 40 years, who sadly passed in 2020, at the age of 84. Interestingly, San Remo Rustico is located on the main level of a house and Roberto lives on the upper level. San Remo has contributed to the Italian food scene in Canada by offering a true welcoming environment as Roberto would entertain guests by dancing while Vincenza would occasionally sit and eat with customers.

As all recipes were from Roberto's childhood and growing up in Italy. All the food that is found at San Remo Rustico is authentic, traditional, and family recipes. Their best-selling item is Ascolane stuffed olives that are served as antipasto's, which are also packaged and sold at local shops within Hamilton. The recipe originates from Ascoli, Chef Roberto's hometown. The establishment also offers a 12-layer handmade lasagna that has a meat and vegetarian option. Every pasta served at San Remo Rustico, including the lasagna sheets, are made in house and freshly cut when ordered.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced San Remo Rustico to move away from the sit-down restaurant experience they once offered and focus solely on takeout. When government regulations permitted, Chef Roberto was able to offer outdoor patio seating. San Remo did not have a social media presence before the pandemic; however, Roberto's grandchildren have made social media accounts for the business in order to advertise what they have to offer. In 2020 Chef Roberto gave back to the community by partnering with DHL to give 170 packaged homemade meals to Hamilton Airports essential service workers amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Chef Roberto looks forward to re-opening San Remo Rustico's sit-down restaurant experience once it is safe to do so.

San Remo Rustico's Chef Roberto is full of energy, hardworking man, that hopes for great things in the near future. Chef Roberto, the "Olive King", hopes to expand to bigger stores and other geographical areas, Toronto being first on his list, to sell his Ascolane stuffed olives. In addition, he hopes to continue bringing the community together to enjoy the taste of Italy and the warm and welcoming environment of San Remo Rustico.