

Maroni's Pizza a favorite for over 30 years

BY PATRICE WILDING (STAFF WRITER)

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Good pizza isn't hard to find in Northeast Pennsylvania. One West Scranton restaurant is a great example of that, having made a name for itself as a community favorite for more than 30 years.

Maroni's Pizza on St. Ann Street has enjoyed a steady clientele thanks to its famous goopy-cheese square pizza. Brothers Carmen and Dominic Pellegrino, who emigrated to the area from Calabria, Italy, in the late 1960s, bought the business in 1982. They brought their brother-in-law, Tony Coccimiglio, into the fold as a co-owner, convincing him to return to the area from Massachusetts.

The three decided to keep the name and the recipe the same, since the customers were already familiar with the winning formula.

"We didn't change anything. We never thought of renaming or redoing it," Carmen said, citing the adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The key to success at the modest family eatery has been to stick with what works, he said.

"We treat people fair, and are honest with people, and made sure we give them a consistent product," Carmen explained. "You know what they call me? Dinosaur. I haven't changed anything in 30 years ... same suppliers, same ingredients."

In addition to the popular square pizza, Maroni's also serves a round pizza as well as a variety of hoagies. Carmen described himself and his brother and brother-in-law as "utility players," since they all have a hand in each aspect of the business. Their families also have played an important role in keeping the business running.

Carmen's wife, Rita; Dominic's wife, Rose; and their sister, Josephine, who is married to Mr. Coccimiglio, help with phones and taking orders. The couples have eight children between them, all of whom have worked in the pizza shop at some point during their high school and college years.

"The reason I love coming to work is my customers. We grew up together," Carmen said, adding that his work "never" gets old. "I don't force myself to come to work. I feel like my customers are an extension of my family, because you see them on a regular basis."

With seating for about 50 in two rooms, one of which is regularly reserved for private birthday parties and gatherings, Maroni's is a cozy neighborhood place. The owners are known for supporting numerous local groups, including school PTAs, youth football teams and churches.

"Personally, I feel it's important to give to the community, to the people who have been supporting us through the years," Carmen said.

And for those who have never tried Maroni's famous pizza, he encourages them to come in and give it a shot.

"It's probably something different than they've had before. It's a little unique," Carmen promised.

Contact the writer: pwilding@timeshamrock.com