

Montecatini Ristorante Celebrates 30th Anniversary, Same Day as Loma Prieta Earthquake

Chef Ermes Paulin is still cooking at restaurant every day since Day One

(Walnut Creek – October 14, 2019) The award-winning Walnut Creek restaurant Montecatini will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary on October 17th this year. This popular Italian eatery opened at the same hour when the Loma Prieta Earthquake hit the San Francisco Bay Area. Chef Ermes Paulin opened the restaurant at 5 pm, and four minutes later, the 6.9 earthquake shook the Bay Area. Since then, Montecatini has become a timeless classic, serving consistently delicious Italian cuisine and fine wines to the San Francisco East Bay community and to travelers far and wide.

While today's dining scene news mostly consists of openings and closings of restaurants, this is a rare story of one restaurant, Montecatini, with one hard working talented chef, Ermes Paulin, that weathered 30 years of economic ups and downs, made adjustments to recessions, listened to diners' preferences, and continues to be successful and relevant.

The foundation of a successful restaurant is consistently delicious food. Chef Ermes Paulin is on task every day leading his staff at Montecatini to achieve that. Chef Ermes, born in Vicenza Italy and classically culinary trained in Rome, worked as a chef in Rome, London, the cruise ship Fairsea and various California restaurants before he started in Montecatini in 1989 as Chef. Along with the first owner Ray Johnson, they developed a Northern Italian menu that satisfied diners year after year. Kip Finn was Montecatini's second working owner from 1995 until 2014 when he sold and gifted a portion of the restaurant to Chef Ermes and his wife Teresa Cheung. Teresa, a practicing professional chemical engineer with a BS from Yale and a business degree, was Kip's neighbor when he introduced the couple in 2006. Teresa and Ermes were married in 2010.

As chef-owner, Chef Ermes continues his meticulous leadership in the kitchen while Teresa runs the front of the house and acts as General Manager and Wine Director. She escalated the wine program, enhanced the ambiance, made marketing improvements and brought new technologies to the restaurant. On Friday and Saturday nights, you can see Teresa greeting the guests at the front door and her husband Chef Ermes with his other chefs, doing their magic in the kitchen in front, creating the most sumptuous Italian fare for everyone.

Since the husband and wife team became owners, Montecatini Ristorante has won numerous awards and recognition including Best Pasta from Walnut Creek Magazine for the Fettuccine Alla Viareggina, Best Chef and Best Italian Restaurant of the San Francisco East Bay Area the last four years in a row from Diablo Magazine and the Award of Excellence from Wine Spectator Magazine the last three years in a row.

With so many California independent restaurants closing because of high labor and other costs, Montecatini survives. This is due to the lucky combination of dedicated owners, amazing staff, loyal customers and delicious food at fair prices. October 17, 2019 marks Montecatini Ristorante's 30th Anniversary. Please join us during our 30th Anniversary week and all our guests received a beautiful commemorative souvenir as our thank you for everyone's support during our past 30 years.

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