Dunmore Corners
The key to your community

A Delicious Tradition
DOMA Importing Examines the Past to Determine the Future
Quality and Authenticity Never Go Out of Style

Times change — and so does DOMA Importing Co. Learn more about how they’ve adapted for nearly eight decades.

by Danielle Zimmerman
Editor

For a store that opened nearly 80 years ago, DOMA Importing Co., on Drinker Street, is surprisingly current. In fact, since the business was founded in 1934 by Dominic Mastri, Sr., it has continually learned to bend — not snap — in the changing winds by responding to local consumer needs throughout the decades.

History of DOMA Importing Co.

Dominic Mastri Sr. arrived on American shores from Italy on the Stampalia in the 1920s. His sights were set on south Scranton where his two brothers were making a decent living operating a general grocery store. He worked there while putting himself through college at the University of Scranton. When he graduated college, he took a job at a local butcher shop. Having spent many years in the food industry, he eventually realized what it had been lacking.

“He saw a need to open up a store for the Italian immigrants who were coming to the area,” said Dominic Mastri, Jr. of his father.

So, on April 19, 1934, Mastri, Sr. opened DOMA Importing Co. in Dunmore, taking the first two letters of his first name and the first two letters of his last name.

“He primarily sold to the local working class, mostly miners,” Mastri, Jr. said.

“You get people coming in as grandparents with their grandchildren just like they came in with their grandparents when they were young.”
— Dominic Mastri, Jr. said of the store’s longstanding tradition in Dunmore.

Families would visit DOMA Importing Co. and stock up on bulk pantry items, such as 100-pound bags of flour or sacks of macaroni, as well as specialty ingredients that Mastri, Sr. had shipped in from Italy. Mastri, Sr. would often allow people to take things from the store on credit as they needed them and later bill them when they received their pay each month.

The original store thrived in Dunmore and he went on to open up two more — one in West Scranton and another in Jessup. Given all of his success, Mastri, Sr. figured it would be best to have his own warehouse so he could supply his own stock for the three stores. Soon, other grocery stores were asking to buy wholesale from his warehouse.

“Young Italian immigrants who were coming to the area saw a need to open up a store for the Italian immigrants who were coming to the area,” said Dominic Mastri, Jr. on the 1934 founding of DOMA Importing Co.

By the 1950s, DOMA Importing Co. consisted of more than 100 wholesale contracts with local groceries, four delivery trucks and five salesmen. Business was booming. When Mastri, Jr. wrapped up his studies at the University of Scranton in the late-1960s, he returned to Dunmore and got a job working as a salesman for the family business. DOMA Importing Co. continued to do well over the next few decades, even as pressure from bigger corporate distributors caused local grocery stores to demand a broader selection of goods.

By 1992, Mastri, Jr. was ready to sell his shares to his two sons. Today, Dominic Mastri, Sr. owns the original store, while his sons Dominic Mastri, Jr. and Vincent Mastri run two of the other locations.

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Mastri, Sr. eventually retired and handed his business over to his sons. By 2006, they were down to just the original store in Dunmore. When a couple of proprietors approached them about purchasing the DOMA Importing Co. business, they thought it’d be a good idea to take the deal and retire.

The New DOMA Importing Co.

Not long into his retirement, Mastri, Jr. found himself hanging around the store.

“I was a retiree who didn’t want to be retired,” he said.

The new owners hired him back as a manager, three days a week. Together, they revamped the store and tailored its focus.

“Now, we’re an ingredients store for people who like to cook and need authentic ingredients,” Mastri, Jr. said.

Mastri, Jr. said that they chose that concept after he began to notice a trend — over the past 10 years more people, including men, have been adding cooking to their list of hobbies. Not just any cooking, people are more inclined to make something gourmet, he said. It’s no secret that, in recent years with the rise of farmer markets, people have become more interested in quality ingredients available. DOMA Importing Co. strives to meet that demand.

People are also more willing to try new things, Mastri, Jr. said. A few months ago, a columnist published a recipe for an authentic San Marzano pizza that was made with a special kind of sardine sauce. The store had it. "A few years ago, people would have thought that was strange,” said Mastri, Jr. Today, unknown tastes and foreign foods are considered intriguing.

You don’t need to know what you’re looking for when you walk in to DOMA Importing Co., because you’re sure to leave with something. It’s a treasure trove of vinegars, oils, meats and cheeses. They boast over 75 cuts of homemade and imported pastas, homemade mozzarella, and homemade sweet, hot and garlic sausage. Authenticity and quality is in the limelight at DOMA Importing Co.

However, quality is expected from more than just the food and ingredients — DOMA Importing Co. also wants to provide the best service possible. "Everyone who comes in the store is in a good mood," Mastri, Jr. said.

DOMA Importing Co. is located at 302 E. Drinker St. in Dunmore. It’s filled with Italian specialty ingredients, such as meats, cheeses, vinegars and more. Photo courtesy of Corey Aebli.

What You’ll Find at DOMA Importing Co.

Meats: Homemade hot, sweet and garlic Italian sausage, homemade sopressata, bologna, capicola, cooked ham, dry sausage, Genoa salami, lonza, mortadella, pancetta, pepper ham, pepperoni, prosciutto, salami, spiced turkey and meatballs

Cheeses: homemade mozzarella, locatelli, pecorino romano, American, asiago, bocchi, cooper sharp, fontina, gorgonzola, muenster, parmesan, parmigiano reggiano, pepper cheese, provolone, sardo and sharp provolone

Sweets: amaretti, candied cherries, mixed candied fruits, figs, Panettone, Torrone and biscotti

They also sell kitchen utensils, such as pasta makers, ravioli makers, cheese graters, tomato presses, pizza stones and more.

For more information about DOMA Importing Co., visit them online at doma-italian-market.com or in store at 302 E. Drinker St.

The Best of the Best

DOMA Importing Co. carries more than 5,000 Italian ingredients but some are more sought after than others.

San Marzano Tomatoes

San Marzano tomatoes are grown in the Agro Sarnese Nocerino region of Italy in the ashes of Mount Vesuvius. The tomatoes are known for their sun-ripened, rich, flavorful taste. Don’t be fooled by those that simply claim the San Marzano name — a Protected Designation of Origin (D.O.P.) seal certifies that the product is not only made from authentic San Marzano tomatoes, but also ensures quality.

Olive Oil

Olive oil is the go-to cooking oil for Italian food. A good olive oil can be used for everything from dressing a salad to sautéing fresh vegetables. High-quality olive oil is also good for you — rich in antioxidants and low in saturated fat. The best (and often most expensive) olive oils are made from olives picked by hand and stone-pressed without the need for heat. Look for terms such as “extra virgin” and “first cold pressed.”

Grana Padano

An Italian dish is never quite finished without a sprinkle of grated cheese and in many households Grana Padano is the cheese of choice. Similar to Parmesan, except made exclusively from the milk of cows from Northern Italy’s Po River Valley. Aged between nine and 30 months, Grana Padano is best served on its own with a glass of wine or grated over a dish.

Balsamic Vinegar

Balsamic vinegar is made from the boiled-down juice of grapes which is given time to ferment and mature. The ideal conditions for balsamic vinegar production is in the Modena and Reggio Emilia regions of Italy because their drastic temperature change between cold winters and hot summers aid in the fermentation and maturing of the vinegar. Italian law prohibits balsamic vinegar producers from claiming the vinegar to “sleep” in low temperatures and then transferring it from big barrels to smaller barrels.

For more information, visit DOMA Importing Co. online at doma-italian-market.com.

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