

New York, NY  
September 12, 2008

## At DiPalo's Fine Foods, they're real Italian heros

BY RACHEL WHARTON



Luigi, Marie and Salvatore DiPalo say cheese from behind the counter at DiPalo's Fine Foods

Lou DiPalo would be first to tell you that Little Italy's Feast of San Gennaro, the annual street fair that started Thursday, has changed over its 81 years. DiPalo - with siblings Marie and Sal, the fourth generation to run the family's famous 98-year-old Italian foods shop on Mott and Grand Sts. - remembers when it was a potluck block party celebrating the birth or feast day of San Gennaro, the patron saint of Naples.

"Over the years," he admits, "it's become a little more commercial, but the meaning is still the same."

From DiPalo's perspective, the 11-day fest is more than sausage and peppers, red-sauced pastas eaten along Mulberry St. and sugar-topped zeppoles, though those are plenty good. It's a celebration of the neighborhood's Italian heritage and the contributions of Italian immigrants. The families (and most of their bakeries and butcher shops) may have moved on to other neighborhoods, DiPalo says of Little Italy, "but the spirit of the Italian immigrant is here."

Along with other fourth-generation shops like Ferrara's Bakery down the street, DiPalo's Fine Foods keeps that spirit alive through food, complete with refrigerated windows displaying provolones that look just as they did when it opened in 1910. But the DiPalos have modernized over the years, too, going from a simple latticini, or cheese shop, to a celebration of Italy and the best contemporary vinegars, oils, pastas, cured meats, coffees and flavors from each of the country's regions. And this fall, DiPalo's son Sam will open an all-Italian wine shop next door.



San Gennaro visitors don't have to buy anything, says DiPalo, but he hopes that they'll stop in and sample the country - DiPalo's being famous for letting you taste nearly everything. "We're representatives of Italian immigrants and of the contributions and representations of today's Italy," says Lou DiPalo, "and we're very proud of it."

Here are a few of Lou DiPalo's favorite Italian food products, all of which you can now ship to far-flung New Yorkers thanks to their brand-new Web site, [www.DipaloSelects.com](http://www.DipaloSelects.com).



#### **SPECK ALTO ADIGE**

A still-new import to the city - "we introduced it to [America](#)," says DiPalo - speck is a cured meat made in Italy's Alpine region near the border of [Germany](#). Pork leg is deboned and smoked, covered with salt and spices and air-cured. Rich and smoky like lean bacon, it's cut into paper thin slices that literally melt in your mouth. DiPalo recommends pairing it with his ultra-creamy Asiago Pressato cheese. Wrap a slice of speck around a slice of it and grill or broil it just for a second or two, or add a bit of speck to a pizza just as it comes out of the oven. It's \$19.99 a pound.