



Lena's Italian Kitchen

STEFANO & CINDY
ZANGER HAVE THE
SECRET SAUCE IN
DOWNTOWN BLISSFIELD

Photos and Story by Phil Eich,
Storyville Social, as part of the
Michigan Main Street Story
Series

"Lena is my mom, born and raised in Sicily. She came to the United States when she was about 19, and always wanted to have a restaurant.

She's the best cook anyone knows. I had a lot of friends growing up, maybe because of her cooking. Some of my friends will still tell stories and say, 'Oh, we knew when Lena was baking bread because we could smell it when we got off the bus.'

She would wait for us after school and have bread for everybody. All my friends. That was her passion - feeding people. That would always make her happy. Even now, I will do things a certain way

because that's what Lena would do. If we're baking bread, and someone shows up - they're getting bread because that's what she would do.

We had a small pizza place in Bedford, previously. We started off there and were quite successful, but it was take-out only. Then we decided that we wanted to try to have a sit-down place and this building became available and had a dining room, so we moved.

My mom was here very actively for a number of years. She just had some health problems and had to take a step back, so now my wife and I are here, keeping the tradition alive.

But I want to keep it going and I want to make sure that we're still doing things the same way she always did it. All the recipes we use are still her recipes because if it ain't broke, you know?

Maybe 20 years ago, people like us were thought of as outsiders. But we've tried really hard to support the community however we can. Anything for the schools, we try to support. All the sporting events, they have our pizzas. We are just trying to help out anywhere in the community that we can. Of course, we'd like to be known for having good food, but we'd like to be known as a good member of the community.

The best way to describe our food is a 'Sunday meal'. We even make the sauce the same way my mom would make it for our family on Sundays. Our lasagna, you're not going to get anything closer to than that for traditional Italian lasagna. We've been here 20 years and some people still think we're just pizza, but we have some really, really good Italian food.

We like to tell people when you come here, we treat you like family and the business community here is like family, too. The people have supported us and the other businesses here.

We just love being in Blissfield."

-Stefano and Cindy Zanger,
Lena's Italian Kitchen,
Blissfield, Michigan



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