

# Portland Italian Businessmen's Club Newsletter



October 2009

## L 'angolo della Cultura

For almost a century, Italian automobiles have been known for great styling and power... and in Fiat's case for a while, unreliability. As a result, Fiat lost the US market. Aside from the luxury autos and sports cars of Ferrari, Maserati (both owned by Fiat) and Lamborghini (owned by Audi), Italian cars have not been sold new in the US since 1995, and Fiats haven't been sold here for almost 25 years. Fiat was doing so poorly world-wide that 5 years ago, GM paid Fiat \$2 billion to get out of a deal to acquire the company.

Fiat has now recovered with a story that should become a Harvard Business case study. They have regained popularity by building cars are now very reliable, have nice styling, and by cutting costs and smart marketing. This year, they saved Chrysler after its bankruptcy with a last minute alliance, with Fiat in control. It's a risky deal that, if successful, will provide Chrysler with efficient engines and Italian styling, and Fiat with a distribution system in the USA. The combined company must overcome a bankruptcy and poor past image, but with the best pieces of each, it's a good bet.



European Fiat Cinquecento

Sergio Marchionne

A large part of Fiat's recent success is attributed to Sergio Marchionne. With an MBA, law degree and proven management skills, he was brought to Fiat as CEO in 2004 at age 57. Marchionne quickly changed much of Fiat's culture and management, reduced costs, introduced new models and made Fiat a top brand in South America. Born in Abruzzo, Sergio moved to Canada with his family as a teen and holds citizenship in both Italy and Canada.

What can we expect from Fiat in the near future? The Fiat Cinquecento (500) will be the first car imported to the US and later, built here. Its name and look are of the car that made Fiat famous after WWII. Hugely successful in Europe and South America, it has style, reliability and value and competes favorably with the Mini Cooper at a lower price. Look for the imported version here in about a year. Alfa Romeo (also Fiat owned) models should follow by 2012.

## Meeting Notices

Our next general dinner meeting will be on October 13 at 6:00 at Caro Amico on Barbur Blvd in Portland. Our speaker will be our president, Frank Genovese, who will talk about "growing up Genovese", stories about "family" and friends back east.

Our speaker for the September 8 meeting was Jo Ann Gallo, President of UNICO Portland. Jo Ann spoke about the country's largest Italian-American organization, UNICO, whose purpose closely mirrors that of the IBC. Though similar in purpose, the basic makeup of each organization is distinct; they are a large national group and we are a local businessmen's club. The discussion afterwards was about the possibility of our two groups working together on a future event which would benefit both groups and the local organizations we both support. The IBC board was invited to the next UNICO meeting to discuss this further and the results will be presented at the next IBC meeting.

Members are invited to attend IBC's board meetings, held on the 4th Tuesday of the month at Ron Milio's *Port City Pasta* in LO. Our October meeting will be at 6:30 on October 27 (see page 2).

## Columbus Day Dinner and Dance

There are still a few days to reserve your table for the Columbus Day Dinner/Dance sponsored by Portland's Festa Italiana on Saturday, October 3 at the Red Lion Jantzen Beach, 6:30 to midnight.

The event features a four course Italian dinner by Chef Timothy Casasanta. Wine is included and a vegetarian dinner is available. Entertainment will be provided by highly acclaimed tenor, Tony La Stella, in a Las Vegas style dinner show followed by dancing. Tony is a vocalist of popular and traditional Italian music and a great showman.

The price is \$50 per person. This is a very popular annual event with all of Portland's Italian organizations participating. Many IBC members will be there. For reservations, contact Sheryl Ignazzitto at 503-653-0946 or Janet Philichi at 503-244-0565.

## **Business Focus on Port City Pasta**

IBC board meetings are regularly held at member Ron Milio's Port City Pasta in Lake Place Center, Lake Oswego. During the dinner meeting, Ron delights us with a wonderful meal: salad, fresh pasta, side dish, wine and always ending with cannoli. Those dinner meetings are a good reason to run for the board next year, or at least occasionally attend a board meeting.

With a business background as well as being in the "pasta" business for years, Ron, his sister Arlene Johnson, and Ron's wife Kristin took over Port City Pasta in 2008 and, while maintaining customer's favorites, added new pastas, sauces, including their traditional Italian family recipes.

Their fresh pasta is the best in the state and they will cut for you on demand. Their ravioli is made with a special pasta recipe designed to let the filling shine through and are made with traditional and specialty fillings. Sauces range from the traditional Marinara and Tomato Basil, to spicy Puttanesca, Romesco, and Artichoke and Merlot.



Arlene, Kristin and Ron

For today's busy families, they make pasta and sauces daily and quickly freeze them, so a meal for two or more can be taken home, cooked and put on the table in short order. Also on the menu are panini, which are made with freshly baked focaccia and the best meats and cheeses.

Ron also does catering for large parties or special events, providing everything from appetizers to full meals, including an exciting range of wines (mostly Italian) to complement the food. In the deli department are cheeses, cold cuts, wine, drinks, Italian cookies, cannoli and many other specialty items.

Port City Pasta has received national recognition from Gourmet Magazine featuring their focaccia bread and sandwiches. Ron is at 503.699.2927 or [www.portcitypasta.com](http://www.portcitypasta.com).

## **IBC Christmas Dinner Planning**

The IBC Christmas dinner is now set for Tuesday, December 8, which is the date of our regular monthly meeting. Positive feedback from last year's party has resulted in our keeping the same restaurant, format and entertainment; the Stock Pot Restaurant at the Red Tail golf course in Beaverton and for entertainment, IBC member, John English, 'The Voice'. Please ask your wife or girl friend to set aside the date for this event. Roger Cherry is coordinating the event and is asking each business owners to help with a raffle prize, such as a food basket. Price is not set, but targeted at \$50 per person.

## **"A.J." Colasurdo Recovering**

Our long time board member, past president and Hall of Honor recipient, Dr. A.J. Colasurdo is recovering nicely at home after a summer of heart problems. His first emergency trip to the hospital on June 24 identified pulmonary edema as the cause of his pains. He was sent home with medication until on August 16, a serious heart attack sent him via ambulance to Good Samaritan Hospital. He awoke there the next day to the cheers from his family of "Happy Birthday", which fortunately did not provoke another attack. Choosing medication over surgery, A.J. is now recovering nicely at home with the expert care of his wife, Marie. Our best wishes and prayers to A.J. for continued recovery.