

COMPUTER GAMES



Fewer kids getting hold of adult content videos

It seems there are fewer sales of racy video games to those considered too young to play them. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission found that 42 per cent of the 400 stores it investigated improperly sold games with mature content to children 16 and younger who weren't accompanied by an adult. That's a drop from 2003, when nearly 70 per cent of the stores sold games to underage customers.

The Associated Press

AUTO SECTOR



GM will open new plant in Mexico in 2008

General Motors is closing plants in Canada and the United States, but plans to open one in Mexico. It will spend more than \$600 million US on a small-car assembly plant. Between 1,800 and 2,300 people will work at the plant, set to open in 2008. GM lost \$10.6 billion in 2005, largely due to lower North American sales and rising costs. It plans to cut its workforce by 30,000 by 2008.

The Associated Press

INTERNET



More ads to pop up on Google searches

Google users will have to deal with more popups. The search leader is going to start displaying ads within its local maps. The ads will show up as part of balloons that float over the map itself and will carry a small image. Google doesn't plan to display the ads when a user is looking up an address or searching for directions. The move comes as it tries to make money from its free services.

The Associated Press

SPECTICKER... A WORK OF THE HEART. DOCTOR BEAT COMA AND PAIN TO INVEST IN SUCCESS. GO 16

BEST PRACTICES ||| Behind the scenes of a successful local business

THE FAMILY TOUCH

Three generations at Salerno Dairy are still building on the success of its immigrant founder

BY MEREDITH MacLEOD

At Hamilton's Salerno Dairy, cheese grows on trees.

The family kind, at least.

There are now three generations of the Marzaro family involved in the company. Matriarch Marianna Marzaro is the president. Her daughters are managers and principal shareholders. One son-in-law is chief executive officer and the other is sales director. One grandchild is a company accountant, another is upgrading the plant's food safety program. And through it all, the legacy of founder Carmine Marzaro is everywhere.

While other local cheesemakers have come and gone, Salerno has lasted close to half a century and become a staple in local grocery stores.

It's now the only cheesemaker in Hamilton, churning out cheese around the clock, every day of the year from its plant in the east end.

Salerno produces a staggering four million kilograms of cheese a year, gobbling up 40 million litres of milk.

There are 130 employees in Hamilton and another 40 at a distribution hub in Montreal.

Salerno makes 47 products in-house — mozzarella, bocconcini, ricotta, provolone, mascarpone, cheddars, grated hard cheese, goat and sheep's milk cheese — and imports and distributes cheeses and other foods from around the world, too. Pizzerias can now get everything they need directly from Salerno.

"We go with the flow of the market," said Dino Cortina, sales director and vice-president. "It always dictates what you're doing."

About 90 per cent of retail sales are in grocery stores throughout Ontario and across Canada. The company also operates a small retail outlet on site, which was upgraded during a recent expansion.

Salerno also sells cheese to large food manufacturers for frozen and fresh pastas and to restaurants, hotels and hospitals. The company has developed markets in Asia, the Middle East, Mexico and the Caribbean.

"This went from a small to a medium to a large company by trying and experimenting," said general manager Robin Ghosh.

"We always want to see if it can take us in another direction. There is no harm in trying."

But there's always a natural limit on just how big Salerno can grow. Its access to milk is strictly controlled through Ontario's marketing board.

"When the raw material doesn't grow with the business, you have to grow it elsewhere," said Anna Fidanza, the founder's daughter, who handles human resources.

In all, the food service and processing arm accounts for 50 per cent of business. Retail is the other half. The sale of Salerno-made cheese is 60 per cent of volume and resale of imports is 40 per cent.

Growth has been swift over the past 20 years. In the mid-1980s, there were about a dozen employees. But founder Carmine Marzaro visualized a

Set goals and value employees

(Answers compiled from Anna Fidanza, Barbara Cortina, Angelo Fidanza, Dino Cortina and Robin Ghosh)

Biggest challenge:

"To grow with the times and keep up with the market. And to maintain the family-type atmosphere but grow with the corporate world. There is lots of competition. Nothing is easy."

Biggest surprise:

"We don't have surprises. Everything is a challenge rather than a surprise, whether it's on the manufacturing or selling side. By setting yourself goals, you don't get surprised."

Best decision:

"To keep up with technology and machinery. If you don't have technology, you can't compete."

Worst decision:

"There hasn't been anything that has set us back. We've made products we thought would sell and they didn't but it wasn't a bad decision to try it. You always have to try something new. We've made mistakes but nothing that has changed the company."

Learn the most:

"Here, at the University of Salerno, we've always been shown what to do, but then we were able to take things over and try our own way."

Best advice given:

"Never give up. It's never impossible to do anything. Set the goal and reach it. We learned that from Dad time and time again."

Best advice to give:

"Focus yourself and persevere. It's hard work. Roll up your sleeves and get into it. There is no high pedestal for anyone in a business."

Secret to success:

"Keeping our employees happy and informed. Without their contribution, we're not here. We've grown with the people who work for us."

much bigger future.

"He saw the possibilities," said Fidanza.

"He put us on a path to growth and if he hadn't, we wouldn't have been able to secure the (milk) quota we have now."

In 1988, Salerno bought another family-owned cheesemaker, Gos & Gris in Hannon. It gave Salerno another brand identity and a thriving mail order division specializing in pecorino and montasio varieties.

Fidanza and sister Barbara Cortina say their father had enormous barriers to overcome. He spoke little English and had



PHOTOS BY GARY YOKOYAMA, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Salerno owners and senior staff: Robin Ghosh, left, Angelo and Anna Fidanza, Marianna Marzaro and Dino and Barbara Cortina. Salerno is the only cheesemaker in Hamilton.



Salerno produces an amazing four million kilograms of cheese a year, using up to 40 million litres of milk. There are 130 employees in Hamilton and another 40 at a distribution centre in Montreal.

no more than a Grade 5 education.

He faced tremendous prejudice as he built up his business, yet never let it get him down.

Before he died, he set up the company to go on without him. He trained son-in-law Angelo Fidanza in making cheese and operating the plant.

He brought in son-in-law Dino Cortina to head up sales and marketing.

His daughters were made controlling shareholders.

They see the business as both their family heritage and its future. Several more third-generation members of the family are poised to take up roles.

"The business has always been a big part of our lives," said Barbara. "I can remember being a kid in a white coat behind the counter serving customers."

That sense of family extends to employees, some of whom have worked for Salerno for more than 30 years.

"We've grown this together as a team. That's why we've had success," said Barbara.

The success includes a state-of-art plant, a large shipping and receiving area built last year and a fancy new street sign installed just a couple of weeks ago. Salerno is also building an on site wastewater treatment plant, anticipating strict new sewer discharge regulations from the city.

Inside, much of the cheesemaking is automated, with gleaming vats carefully regulating temperature and moisture and machines removing liquid, stretching and packaging the cheese.

But some types, like ricotta, still need a human touch.

That's the way it all started. Close to a half century ago, Salerno started at Cannon Street and West Avenue with Carmine Marzaro and milk delivered in metal cans.

His widow, Marianna, vividly remembers the backbreaking work of cheesemaking — lugging the heavy cans, working the cheese by hand. She and her husband got up at 3 a.m. because that's when the milk was delivered.

Carmine came to Canada from the province of Salerno in Italy in 1959, first landing in Montreal. When he came to Hamilton shortly after, he started working for a cheese company, but soon discovered he knew more than his bosses. He had worked for a cheesemaker in his small town as a teenager.

In his time off, Marzaro rented equipment from his bosses to make the cheeses he knew from home. He launched Salerno Dairy in 1961, making mozzarella for the growing Italian population in the city.

In the early days, he sold his wares at Hamilton Farmers' Market, with his young daughters helping out.

"There wasn't much Italian cheese around then, just cheddar," recalled Anna, the eldest daughter.

Two of Marianna's brothers helped out, knocking on doors to sell the cheese.

That was the norm in the days when milk, bread and vegetables were delivered door to door.

In 1964, Salerno moved into rented space on Morley Street, an industrial area off Parkdale. Over the years, the family slowly bought machines and expanded east on Morley to more than 300,000 square feet.

Now, Salerno takes up most of the block. Across the street is Springer's Meats.

"People tell us all we need is a winery to set up shop and we're all set," joked Ghosh.

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