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Restaurant

CLASSES NEWS
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BY SORRENTINO'S

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IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT PATTY

FINDING IT MADE EASY WITH TODAY'S WIDE VARIETY OF CHOICES

TOP OF THE MORNING

THE BREAKFAST SEGMENT IS EXPLODING

(left to right) Carmelo Rago JR, marketing & operations for Sorrentino's Restaurant Group with Chef Antonio Tardi

Antonio Tardi
Executive Chef

Sorrentino's

- A Classic Re-Invented

Edmonton's famous Italian restaurant group re-brands its cooking classes

+ HOW TO BUILD A RESTAURANT ADVERTISING STRATEGY THAT MAXIMIZES IMPACT AND MAINTAINS BRAND LOYALTY

Sorrentino's A Classic Re-Invented

Edmonton's Famous Italian Restaurant Group Re-Brands Cooking Classes

How do you take a well-established restaurant brand and create something new? That was the challenge facing Carmelo Rago Jr., marketing & operations for Sorrentino's Restaurant Group, when the company decided to rebrand their cooking classes.

Carmelo's father, Carmelo Rago Sr., and grandfather, Maurizio Saccomanno, founded the first Sorrentino's restaurant in North Edmonton more than forty years ago. There are now six Sorrentino's restaurant locations, two cafes and three pizza and wine bars in the Edmonton area, as well as a catering division and a cooking school.

Capitalizing on the success of the restaurant group, the cooking school offerings were originally marketed as Sorrentino's Cooking Classes, prioritizing the Sorrentino's brand in the name. While the cooking school hosts a range of classes spanning different cuisines, the name Sorrentino's in Edmonton is synonymous with Italian cooking. Sorrentino's restaurants have been delivering high quality Italian cuisine to local diners for the past four decades, after all.

Part of the rebrand's purpose, Carmelo Jr. explains, is to communicate the range of classes that beginner and experienced home cooks can access through the cooking school. "The new branding is an opportunity to reach out to new customers and show them the diverse cooking classes that we have to offer."

(pictured right) Carmelo Rago Jr., (right) has re-branded Sorrentino's Cooking Classes to YEG Cooking Classes by Sorrentino's headed up by Chef Antonio Tardi (left).

Photo by Ian Grant Photography





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The Rebrand YEG Cooking Classes by Sorrentino's

These five simple words speak directly to the local market while still referencing the award-winning family business. Instead of leading with the restaurant brand, YEG Cooking Classes by Sorrentino's takes us immediately to the location and target market for the classes. The airport code YEG has become a popular nickname for the provincial capital and is used widely across social media platforms, making "YEG Cooking Classes" relevant, search friendly and shareable.

Visually, the rebrand is vibrant; the pinks, purples, yellows, blues, reds and oranges complement playful graphics. Carmelo Jr. says, "The idea for the rebrand was to be fun. We wanted it to leave a lasting first impression."

As with other marketing initiatives the restaurant group has taken on in recent years, the Sorrentino's team worked with a local agency on the rebranding. According to Carmelo Jr., the reaction to the new name has been positive so far, and the sense of fun seems to resonate with customers: "Most people that see the rebrand for the first time really enjoy it."



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Students can try their hand at a range of cuisines and techniques.

The Classes

People who sign up for a class with YEG Cooking Classes by Sorrentino's will see many of the same options that were available under the former name. There are public classes, including general cooking classes, date nights and masterclasses, as well as private cooking classes (including virtual events) that can be booked as corporate teambuilding events or by groups celebrating special occasions. Students can try their hand at a range of cuisines and techniques; they may learn how to make Lebanese tabbouleh salad or Cape Breton crab cakes, craft tapas and mimosas with a partner or perfect a pad thai. Participants get to acquire new culinary skills and enjoy their creations during the event.

Leading the way in the cooking school is Chef Antonio Tardi. Hailing from Napoli, Italy, Chef Antonio has an impressive

resume that has taken him across Europe, into Asia and North America, where he worked for world-renowned hotels and restaurants in senior roles. The wealth of knowledge Chef Antonio brings is passed on to Sorrentino's staff and cooking class participants.

Some classes have a distinctively local Edmonton flair that aligns well with the new YEG name. Chefs from around the city are invited to lead classes as part of the Guest Chef Series, which will appeal to local food enthusiasts. Carmelo Jr. notes that fans of Edmonton restaurant chefs have an opportunity "to learn their most famous dishes in a fun and interactive environment."

Sorrentino's Restaurant Group is known for its philanthropic work, and that continues to play a role in YEG Cooking Classes by Sorrentino's.



"Giving back to the community is engrained in Sorrentino's DNA. We wanted to continue that with the rebrand," Carmelo Jr. explains, adding that one upcoming collaboration will involve the Edmonton Police Service.

New Experiences

While many elements of the cooking school have been retained during the rebranding process, it is not only the name that has changed at YEG Cooking Classes by Sorrentino's. There are two new offerings that Carmelo Jr. says are firsts for a cooking school in Edmonton: international food tours and an "artisanal series" of cooking classes.

"Our first International Food Tour is slated for Fall 2023 in Napoli, Italia. Chef Antonio will take you around his beautiful region of Campania for seven days," Carmelo Jr. explains. The tour reads like a food lover's dream, combining Chef Antonio's experiences and connections to the region with visits to exceptional restaurants, a winery tour and a stop at a cheese factory (to make fresh mozzarella). Plans are already in the works for future international food tours, with possible destinations including Florence, Barcelona and Paris.

The new Artisanal Series at YEG Cooking Classes by Sorrentino's gives participants the opportunity to perfect a skill over a period of 3-5 classes following a curriculum designed by Chef Antonio. The beauty of the concept is that the extended timeframe allows students to immerse themselves in a specific area of culinary interest and gain an expert understanding of the processes and skills involved. The first Artisanal Series will focus on the art of pasta making. Themes for future Artisanal Series courses include Neapolitan Pizza Making, Traditional Italian Sauces & Authentic Gelato Making.

Success Built on Relationships

After 43 years in business, the Rago and Saccomanno families have learned a lot about running a restaurant group. As their business has grown, Carmelo Jr. says one factor in particular has contributed to their continued success. "Without a doubt, success lies in the relationships our team members make with our guests. We are in the people pleasing business. Yes, at the end of the day a dollar needs to be made, but without people filling the restaurant seats, or attending a cooking class, we have nothing." YEG Cooking Classes by Sorrentino's will no doubt continue to prioritize these relationships as their chefs welcome home cooks of all skill levels into the Sorrentino's kitchen. WRN



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