20 years as hairdresser

Mario works on cutting edge

By BRUCE STAPLEY

While Stouffville may have grown and changed in the past 20 years, Mario D'Addese has remained the same energetic hair-cutting entrepreneur.

The 38-year-old operator of Fame Men's Hair Styling on Main St. W. has worked in Stouffville since he first came to Canada in 1968, with nothing but a few years' hair cutting experience in Italy behind him.

"I came to Canada on a Saturday, and I started working at Steve's Barber Shop in the A&P Plaza the very next week," he recalls.

He quickly went about the business of learning English at night school, while acquiring a knowledge of the hair-cutting business that would see him take over Steve's in 1969, changing its name to "The Hairworks".

He sold the business in 1983, and returned to Italy to tend to some personal business. But a year and a half later, he was back, much to the delight of his faithful Stouffville following.

He took over the men's side of the Fame operation after he came back to Canada in 1984, and he's been there ever since.

Ever the personable individual, Mario says he's come to develop a deep love of Stouffville. A Maple resident, he has seriously considered moving here with his wife and daughter, but has found it difficult to do because of his wife's teaching position at Dufferin St. and Hwy 7.

"I've been here so long I know everybody," he smiles. "I had a chance to work in Toronto when I returned from Italy in 1984, but I couldn't stay away from Stouffville."

And while Mario's career interests have always centred around hair cutting and styling, he has worked at broadening his horizons ever since he first came to Canada. He earned his Grade 13 at Bathurst Heights Collegiate, and has since taken Accounting at Seneca College, as well as acquiring his real estate licence.

However, he has no immediate plans for leaving hair styling for another career, and remains hopeful of moving his family here if his wife can arrange a transfer to a school close to Stouffville.

Mario sees the growth that has characterized Stouffville in recent years as a positive thing. "It's made a big difference to the town," he says. "And it's a challenge to me because, with most of the newcomers coming from Toronto, you've got to keep up to date when it comes to cutting hair."

But he insists the influx of people hasn't taken away from the friendly nature of Stouffville's people. "I enjoy the people very much," he insists. "If I didn't, then I wouldn't be doing this type of work."

Mario says he'll engage his customers in conversations ranging from the town itself, right through their personal problems. He gives advice when asked, "but I don't know if they ever use it," he grins.

The subject of sports is something he often finds himself and his customers getting into. His own likes and dislikes? "I think the Leafs stink," he says flatly. "The Blue Jays? Well, they've blown it this year, but they are still a good team over all."

He reports that he has had his share of happy customers through the years, no doubt attributable, at least in part, to his engaging personality.

But there was one exception, he insists. "Several years ago, this seven or eight year old boy came in, and said he wanted a brush cut. Soon after, his mother came in all upset, blaming me for giving him his terrible hair cut."

He claims he has been a little leery of strangers in his shop ever since the Saturday he allowed two ladies to use the washroom, only to have them smash the ceramic top of the toilet bowl. "They took off in a hurry," remembers Mario. "But we got their licence plate, and the police caught them for us. We got a new lid."

Mario feels his 20 years of working in Stouffville qualify him for honorary resident status, and claims to take great pride in his adopted town. He's delighted to see the business community take the strides that it has in the past decade, and looks forward to more progress in the future.

And the one thing his customers can always look forward to is the warm greeting and the friendly welcome they get from Mario every time they walk into his shop, either for a hair cut, or just to visit.

"If I don't feel really good one day, my customers always pick me up and make me feel better," he claims. "It's a great town."

Mario D'Addese has been grooming Stouffville residents for about 20 years. Although he has never lived here, he's gotten to know many locals and feels he deserves honorary resident status. He works at Fame Men's Hair Styling on Main St. W. --Bruce Stapley

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