

— WE'RE GOING TO — ITALY (IN A CULINARY SENSE!)

Last fall when we did one particular 'theme ad' and I allowed we were visiting Denmark, many of you were surprised to see me in the store, I wrote so convincingly I guess! We won't pick favourites, as we'll have some of the specialties from the north and the south. I can remember a long time ago seeing Marcella Hazan at Bonnie Stern's School and she was in her element explaining the various regions of Italy and the cuisine that was unique to each region, almost like they had the 100-mile diet a few millennia before we ever thought of it. I must say that Italian food is one of our family faves and judging from the popularity that these items enjoy in our store, they are your faves as well. Buon Appetito!

— PARMIGIANA — REGGIANO

Many years ago Cathy and I visited Reggio Emilia, the epicentre of the Parmesan world. The little Casificio where this was made, was capable of making three wheels per day, and only during the fertile season when the best grass grows and the cows are the happiest. We moved from the actual kitchen to his storage area, which was actually under the house, but it was significantly larger than the house (the house was a disguise I think)! The cheese is stored for two years, so if you do the math, there were about 1,000 wheels of this very aromatic cheese ripening in the basement — 70,000 lbs to be exact. I think of this every time we reach for the Parmesan and it is yet another reminder that everything has a story. You can get chunks of this cheese or we'll grate it for you. Either way, it's the only Parmesan to have!

Chunks Reg. \$4.99/100g
Gratings Reg. \$5.99/100g

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

— PARMA — PROSCIUTTO

There is a lot of Prosciutto in the market presently and when the very affable Mariela suggested that we promote this type, I asked "why would you choose this one?" Her answer was, "Firstly it's genuine, it comes from Parma, secondly it's always very lean, thirdly, it's moist and not salty (two things that go hand in hand) and fourthly, we only slice that premium centre part — we cook with the end bits." I was convinced, what about you? Now, if you are a tough sell and you need further convincing, tasting might be believing, so we are sampling this on Friday and Saturday mid-day!

Reg. \$6.99/100g

25% OFF THIS WEEK

BALSAMIC VINEGAR

We will be sampling three types this weekend and explaining the characteristics of each, as well as their suggested uses. I think that the worldwide surge in popularity of this product has outstripped the production capabilities of old, and one must be careful of the origins and ingredients of what is now sold as 'Balsamic Vinegar'.

CARLI OLIVE OIL

You will need olive oil to cook Mediterranean and although we sell many kinds, this is probably the best value for quality that we have on the shelf. There is no such thing as a cheap olive oil (it would most likely be made with sweepings) there are some that are so special that you wouldn't use them in salads — and for sure not cooking. This one is pretty versatile and it's colour coded for you. The white label is for dipping and raw consumption (that would include salads) and the gold label is for salads and cooking or when you wish a deeper flavoured oil. Carli White Label 500ml Reg. \$12.95. Carli Gold Label 750 ml Reg. \$17.95

25% OFF THIS WEEK

— BUFFALO — MOZZARELLA

When you watch some of the more spectacular TV commercials and you see the caution 'that you shouldn't try this at home — or anywhere'; but the opposite is true here. I don't mean the Buffalo itself, but the Mozzarella, with some very neat tomatoes, even neater balsamic vinegars (or glaze) and yet neater sea salts. Just like crème brûlée, this is a benchmark that I use to judge restaurants, and perfection is probably more easily obtained at home! A couple rules to follow are: a) always at room temperature; b) use good olive oil; c) use more mature balsamic; d) sea salt for sure; e) freshly cracked pepper. We will have a feature on this cheese and the heirloom tomatoes. We'll be making some Caprese Towers for those who don't want to attempt this at home!

Towers, reg. \$8.99 each. Mozzarella \$5.99 each.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

Robo calls hitting home

Have you received any robo calls recently? Or to put it in more positive terms, have you been invited by an automatic telephone generated message to offer your opinions or participate in a telephone town hall meeting? While the term robo call took on a negative connotation during and after the last federal election, more and more politicians, parties and lobby groups are using telephones as a way to reach out to us.

Last week was a busy one for robo calls in my Richmond Hill household.

Monday, we were informed of a telephone town hall meeting of Richmond Hill MPP Reza Moridi with Vaughan MPP Steven Del Duca that would be happening the next evening.

Then Tuesday evening another automated call came in inviting us to participate and offer our opinions to that same Moridi-Del Duca town hall in the lead up to the provincial budget.

I have learned that residents living in the Oak Ridges-Markham riding of MPP Helena Jaczek were similarly invited to participate in her telephone town hall on the budget.

A rather irate man from Oak Ridges called me to complain that he had picked up his home phone Tuesday evening to make an outgoing call, and was unwittingly involved in the electronic town hall. He told me he couldn't hang up or disengage his phone from this automated discussion and was unhappy that his phone was tied up.

"What if I needed to make an emergency call?" he complained.

Another caller from Richmond Hill was even angrier about the Moridi town hall invitation. He was so upset he told me he called the Liberal Party of Ontario to insist they delete his phone number from their lists and added his phone number to the Do Not Call registry.

I heard strong complaints from another Oak Ridges man on a telephone survey concerning amalgamating fire services across York Region.

While I believe it is mostly an issue driven by proponents in our northern municipalities, especially in Aurora and Newmarket, the Oak Ridges man said he answered the survey questions about fire safety and fire departments working together because he thought he was doing his duty as a citizen.

He didn't know (or tell me) what organization was spearheading the survey but told me the questions seemed to favour amalgamated fire departments.

He was "shocked" that the final two questions on this supposed fire safety survey asked him to rate his satisfaction with his ward councillor and one of Richmond Hill's regional councillors, calling this "inappropriate".

Finally last week, an Aurora resident told me her home message service received an invitation to participate in a Canadian Automobile Association telephone town hall on York Region traffic gridlock. She was forced to listen to a portion of the actual meeting before she was able to delete it.

Negative reactions to automated surveys and opinion events should serve as a warning to political leaders, campaign teams and lobby groups seeking our opinions and input.

The initial invitation from MPPs Moridi and Jaczek to inform us of a town hall meeting the next day was fair game. It provided a number to call if I wanted to participate. But calling again the next night was unnecessary, and some would say, an unwelcome intrusion.

If this is the new frontier — the modern way groups, organizations and political parties will be engaging our opinions — then sensitivity and common sense must prevail.



Marney Beck

Marney Beck is editor of The Richmond Hill Liberal newspaper.

— OLIVE OIL — SOAP

If you are looking for this in our store, it's usually displayed beneath the potatoes! You could guess that we are not a big toiletries store but for this week, this will be front and centre! It's an amazing product with a cult following.

Reg. \$2.99 per bar

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

— WHAT'S FOR — DINNER?

We make three types of Lasagna: Vegetable, Chicken and our Extra Pasta Lasagna. These come in 8x5 foils and they need further roasting in your oven — just follow the directions and life is good! Reg. prices range from \$15.95 to \$16.95 and they serve 2-3.

Fresh Meat Lasagna is also available at the Deli. Reg. \$1.99/100g.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

— WHAT'S HAPPENING — OUTSIDE?

With the moderation in the weather comes pansies, both in flats for you to bring a little colour to your front door or bowls to just sit there looking pretty. As well, we'll have some rosemary pots to fill a more utilitarian niche — they look good, smell good and they taste great in many dishes. These are in cache pots and will be featured at \$17.95.

— WHAT'S — BAKING THIS WEEK?

We've run out of room in our space, but we have been baking, and to see what's on sale, please visit our website at www.thevillagegrocer.com

... and, you'll find our **WHAT'S FOR LUNCH** there as well!

— A TASTE OF — ITALY

Join Massimo & Daniela, authors of Cucina, Vini & Castelli who are experts in the art of creating memorable moments Italian Style. They will captivate your senses as they prepare a delicious recipe from their cookbook for you to taste as they discuss the art of living La Vita Bella.

Date:

Saturday, April 20

Time:

11:30am-2:30pm

Cost: Free

— WHAT'S COOKING — AT THE DELI?

We're going to change things up a bit — we'll start with salad. Although Caesar dressing was not an Italian invention, I'm going to pretend for this week! We make a really super Caesar dressing and when you get one of those this week, you'll get the Romaine Hearts FREE — and they are Andy Boy brand — the best!

Next, we'll have soup and it's Vine Tomato and Basil. We use sweet onions, vine-ripened tomatoes, carrots, celery, olive oil, vegetable stock and 'spices'. Reg. \$7.95. **25% off this week.**

And next, another salad, in this case Bruschetta Pasta. This is one of my lunch faves warmed with a sprinkling of Gaetta Olives and a liberal dusting of Parmesan. It's sublime! Reg. \$1.99/100g. **1/3 off this week.**

And further, we're doing dinner, two of them actually. The first is Lamb Shanks Milanese. We braise lamb shanks with red wine, sweet onions, peppers, tomatoes and 'spices'. Featured this week at \$9.95.

The other is Cannelloni made with ricotta, spinach and served up in a tomato basil sauce with Parmesan. Featured at \$8.95.

SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY, APRIL 21st

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:00-8:00

Sat. 8:00-6:00 - Sun. 9:00-6:00

4476 16th Avenue (Just W. of Kennedy)

(905) 940-0655

