

Principalli's Café celebrates 15 years of family operated faithful service

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Brothers Jason and Dave Principalli, with the help of family and friends, have created a very well-known establishment here in Alton, serving Italian cuisines to the local area and bringing a home-style meal to the table.

This week marks a big accomplishment in the Princivalli books, their 15-year anniversary of business.

Back in 2000, the restaurant started out in just a small corner of the old Honke Pharmacy building, located across the street from St. Mary's Catholic Church on E. 3rd Street in Alton. The business began with John Princivalli, Jason and Dave's father.

"Awhile back, my dad met Dennis Honke, who actually owns the building we operate out of," said Jason. "They became friends, he approached us with a good opportunity and that's how the business actually got started. My dad kicked it off and my little brother Dave and I took over after the first few years."

Eric "Chicken Bone" Smith, who has known the Princivalli's since they were young, moved over with the family when the business kicked off and has helped them keep it trucking ever since. The three young men decided that they wanted to move out of their hometown of Ferguson, Mo. and start fresh in a town with livelihood and prosperity.

"There were already a lot of good pizza places in our hometown and we noticed there wasn't very many carry-out pizza joints over here on this side of the river," said Smith. "Alton just seemed like the best place to land and I think it is pretty safe to say, that was a good decision."

Princivalli's specializes in pizzas, pastas, sub sandwiches and appetizers. Some of the recipes have been passed down through the family. All the food on the menu is the type of food the Princivalli brothers grew up eating.

Over the past 15 years, Princivalli's Café has made significant improvements. The business underwent four substantial expansions, including opening a Speak Easy Bar tucked in the back of the restaurant. Starting off in a corner of the building, the restaurant now expands throughout the entire first floor.

"One of our latest developments was creating a catering unit," said Jason. "Per request of numerous customers, we decided to offer this service to those who wish to enjoy our food outside of the restaurant. We can do office meetings, birthday parties, company events, wedding receptions and more. We can do both in-house catering or out of the house."



Catering Options Include:

- Box Lunches
- Party Sandwiches (2ft through 6ft)
- Party Salads (Custom made to your desire)
- Fruit Trays
- Party Trays (meat, cheese, relish trays)
- Pasta Hot or Cold (several pastas to choose from)
- Appetizers
- Dessert Trays

Princivalli's also offers an extended beverage option, including buckets of beer for only \$10.

"In the beginning, the customers did not have the option to purchase alcohol, but now they can enjoy a beer or a glass of wine with their meal," said Jason. "We just want to give our customers what they want. If they leave happy, we are doing our job and we leave happy."

Princivalli's now offers delivery service as well during regular business hours, which are from 10:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m., 7 days a week.

The management proclaims that it is their close-knit staff that makes Princivalli's such a success.

"One of the best things about our business is our faithful employees who make Princivalli's a great place to come and a great environment to work in," said Jason.

Many of the employees that work at Princivalli's have worked there for quite some time and everyone seems to have the same attitude, taking pride in camaraderie, like a family.

“It’s an extension of our own family kitchen at home,” said Smith. “When we come to work, it is more of a family instead of a staff.”



Kelsy Demond, who has worked at Princivalli’s for over six years now, says the thing she likes the most about working for Princivalli’s is how close everyone is and how each person works as a team.

“We are definitely family around here,” said Demond. “I mean, we see each other nearly every day, we take our breaks together and even after work, we are always going somewhere together, so we spend quite a bit of our time together.”

One attribute that sets Princivalli’s apart from the rest is the pride they take in customer satisfaction. One of their main goals is to keep the people of the neighborhood coming back for more.

“Our greatest value is the loyalty of our customers that have been faithful for 15 years now,” said Jason. “We get to know them on a first name basis and some of them are even up on our current personal endeavors.”

“The customers here are awesome,” said Demond. “We know a lot of them personally, but even if we don’t know them by name, we can usually point out what they are going to order and how they want it cooked. Even when I see a customer outside of the restaurant, I’m thinking, hey, that’s the guy that likes the Chicken Jamboree, spicy on wheat!”

The Princivalli’s staff encourages anyone who has not yet tried out the tasty cuisine of the Italian background, to come on in and try the Princivalli family recipes.

“It’s just a great atmosphere, most of our customers are here multiple times a week so they become part of the family too,” said Demond. “Walking in, Chicken is usually there greeting people. A lot of our customers even call him Chicken when his real name is actually Eric. It’s great.”

Over the years, we have seen businesses come and go. Alton has become a better place to live and visit and we are looking forward to growing with it.

“We would like to thank the businesses of Alton for all the love and support over the years, said Jason. “One of my favorite parts about living and having a business in Alton is the people that we have met over the years. I love the vibe of this area and the feeling of a small community to where you get to meet everybody.”

