

# Santino's in Alton Celebrates 5-Year Journey

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - As Santino's Steak and Pasta House celebrates five years in Alton, owner Sonny Asani is reflecting on the restaurant's journey and his commitment to the community.

“I believe that hard work, good quality food, good portions, reasonable price, people will come in and support us,” Asani said. “I want to thank the whole community and the people that came to us and support us and open their arms for us. We’re here now five years, and we just signed another lease for another five years.”

Asani has opened a few restaurants before, but he knew right away that Santino’s was special. Five years ago, he was visiting Alton when he saw the building that would become Santino’s, located at 180 E. Center Drive near Alton Square Mall. This property has hosted several restaurants before that ultimately failed, and a lot of people warned Asani that the building was “jinxed.” But he couldn’t stay away.

“When I saw the location, I fell in love, and I started doing my homework. When I did my homework, it’s what the town needed,” he said. “It’s not about me, it’s about the town, what the town wanted and needed. And I had the best concept and the best solution for the community, and obviously it worked out and I’m here and I’m blessed.”

The jinx must be broken, because Santino’s is only growing. They recently introduced catering services, and Asani tells people to book their holiday events at Santino’s now before the reservations fill up.

While people love the food, a lot of Asani’s customers say it’s Asani himself that keeps Santino’s business “very strong.” He’s at the restaurant every day and usually greets customers himself as they walk in the door.

For Asani’s son, who helps run the business, the entire restaurant feels nostalgic. The smell of sauce reminds him of family recipes, and the flowers his dad chooses to put on the tables make him think of his grandmother, Asani’s mom. The welcoming atmosphere is another reason why people keep returning, and they’re often greeted with a hug when they do.

But Asani credits the community for this family feel. He said he simply feeds off the “warmth” of his customers and staff, many of whom have been with Santino’s since it opened.

“We’re all there helping each other and doing the best we can for the community,” he added. “I love people, I enjoy people, and it’s the best thing that ever happened to me to be around people.”

For more information about Santino’s Steak and Pasta House, visit their [official website at santinos-resaturant.com](http://santinos-resaturant.com).