

A Sicilian mechanic, a New York Legacy

Gabrielle Pati (August 15, 2011)



The Second Annual Domenico ("Domenick") Spadaro Memorial Drive was held on Saturday August 13, 2011 in White Plains, NY in honor of the beloved Sicilian garagiste whose unique legacy as an Italian artisanal mechanic roars on.

This year celebrates the 50th anniversary of, yes, a mechanic shop. This is no ordinary shop: do not let the greasy floor, piles of metallic parts, or guys in dark blue outfits with wrenches in their hands deceive. European Car Repair of White Plains, NY has a particular legacy as a locus of fine work, complemented by an amicable Sicilian American atmosphere and the Spadaro mechanics skilled to fix cars as fancy or down home as they come.

Opened by the late Domenico ("Dominick") Spadaro of Sicily, European Car Repair opened in 1961, making it half a century old and still running. Mr. Spadaro, a successful mechanic in his youth in Roccalumera, a coastal town in between Messina and Catania, left the Mezzogiorno to come to New York where he opened his shop and provided impeccable auto service all'italiana to the New York Tri state motor community for decades.



When Mr. Spadaro passed away in 2009, his funeral was a standing room only affair. A father of three, he was not only well loved but has been described as a gifted machinist who was determined to repair, not simply replace, auto parts. He also showed respect and patience for each machine he worked on, whether it was a Ferrari or Hyundai. Interestingly, Mr. Spadaro had an almost holistic view of the car as a machine with many parts that interacted together.

Mr. Spadaro, Sicilian born but American resident for most of his life, was a specialist in Italian autos, facilitating his reputation as a go-to man for rare and vintage Italian automobiles. New York Times correspondent in a 2002 article referred to Domenick and his sons as “more artisans than mechanics” and that their attention to detail and quality makes it so that the cars they fix not only run well but “look beautiful.”

Very personable with costumers, Mr. Spadaro allowed his repair shop to be more than a business: it was, and still is, a place of social interaction, almost like a European bar where people convene to chat, drink espresso, and conduct casual business. However, the social atmosphere does not detract from fine work being done at fair prices. The shop is filled with old and obscure parts, and the mechanics are capable of fixing high-end vehicles like Ferrari, Alfa Romeo, Maserati, and of course other less exotic cars driven by most of the masses.

Domenick's sons, Frank and Santo Spadaro, keep the shop running, and his daughter, Vera, assists in running the business as well. The Second Annual Memorial Drive commemorates the life of Domenick Spadaro, whose hard work as an Italian American garagiste positively contributed to so many drivers and car enthusiasts, and whose strong ethic of quality auto work lives on today at European Car Repair.

On Saturday, August 13, 2011, customers who own vintage European cars gathered at a private estate in Armonk, NY. The day began with breakfast, followed by a scenic drive just under 70 miles returning to a lunch that included homemade meatballs, pasta and unique racing cupcakes for dessert. All net proceeds (participation costs \$45) are donated to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

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