

Getting Sauced

Local and Loving It

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLOTTE CULINARY EXPERT HEIDI BILLOTTO

I love buying, eating and sharing the stories of locally made and produced product. Often, the story starts in the kitchen of a mother, grandmother or great grandmother and involves the rediscovery of an old family recipe and how it was brought to life so the current generation (and all of its friends and followers) could enjoy a taste of family memories past.

A nice way to begin the chronicle, but not exactly the starting point of today's culinary tale: the story of Charlotte's own Cannizzaro Marinara and Arribbiatta Italian sauces.

Melanie Cannizzaro was born and grew up in Rochester, New York. Her mother and grandmother didn't make the sauce she now jars, instead, the recipe, a slight twist on a classic combination of tomatoes, EVOO, herbs, vegetables and Parmigiano Reggiano, is her own.

With all due respect to the culinary talents of generations before her, Melanie never found a family recipe for marinara she particularly liked and so, as the story goes, necessity became the mother of invention.

Now transplanted to Charlotte and married to husband Andy Tritten, Melanie has been making her classic Italian American recipe in small from-scratch batches for years. With encouragement from the friends and family who have enjoyed it, she finally decided it was time to share her recipe with the world.

And so, a wonderful North Carolina-based company Cannizzaro Famiglia, was born, bringing old

world Italian traditions to everyone else's home kitchen through two authentic sauce creations.

Melanie started production with her basic and very delicious marinara sauce. The couple makes the sauce every week, sometime running batches several times a week, doing all the work themselves in a local commercial kitchen. The process begins by hand crushing fresh roasted tomatoes, then the sauce is slow cooked. Like the preparation of ingredients and the actual cooking; bottle and labeling the sauce is all done by hand, in small batches in the heart of Charlotte, North Carolina. Made from fresh, local tomatoes when available, Cannizzaro Marinara is naturally gluten free and has no added sugars or artificial flavorings. Each jar proudly sports the North Carolina Department of Agriculture's GotToBeNC logo and moniker.

The Cannizzaro Arribbiatta is the same basic blend of fresh ripe tomatoes, crushed ripe tomatoes, fresh chopped onions, white wine, Parmesan Reggiano, extra virgin olive oil, tomato taste, shredded fresh carrots, fresh basil, fresh oregano, fresh garlic, sea salt and fresh squeezed lemon juice as is in the Cannizzaro Marinara with crushed red pepper added in for just the right amount of heat to give it a nice bit of a kick.

Cannizzaro Sauces taste just like a from-scratch sauce you would make yourself, because they are. You could make your own, but the beauty of this local product is that now, you don't have to! Shortcut any of your favorite recipes by keeping a jar or two



on hand in your pantry, you'll be glad you did.

Need some ideas on how to go from the jar to your table? Look no further than the Cannizzaro Famiglia website where you will find plenty of tasty and easy to prepare recipes.

Andy and Melanie Cannizzaro-Tritten are proud to say they are getting the Carolinas deliciously sauced one jar at a time. Where to buy? When they are not squeezing tomatoes and sticking on labels, this entrepreneurial couple really works the market. Sauces are available through the Cannizzaro Famiglia website, in nearly two dozen different shops and markets in the Queen City and over two dozen different destinations across the Carolinas. *

Where to find it details, recipes and more are listed at CannizzaroFamiglia.com.