

## **Stapleton retailer celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of business** **Barton Horowitz**

*Lombardi's Harley-Davidson enterprise started out as a general store, pasta factory*

Lombardi's Staten island Harley-Davidson, Stapleton, is about to mark its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. With the category of merchandise it sells clearly unconnected to its origins, the business has succeeded in readapting itself to a changing society.

"The name of the business, since I was a child, was always Frank Lombardi and Sons" said Mike Lombardi Jr., who represents the third generation to run the family enterprise. "This is something I knew I would never want to change. So when my father (mike Lombardi Sr.) passed away in 1976, my mother and I purchased my uncle's part of the business and that's when I incorporated. When I took over, I kept Frank Lombardi and Sons as our corporate name, even though I do business as Lombardi's Staten Island Harley-Davidson."

Mike Jr.'s uncle, Anthony Lombardi, passed away in 2001 at the age of 89. His grandfather, the late Frank Lombardi, whose enterprise began in 1905 as a general in Graniteville, was a consummate retailer, who changed the focus of his business in response to a society with a growing desire for motorized transportation.

His original shop, situated close to where the Staten Island Hotel now stands, sold such things as groceries, bicycles, tools, guns, and farm equipment. And well before motorcycles became the focus of his inventory, his main business was selling pasta, which he made on the premise.

But in 1914, Frank, a native of Maddolone, Italy transformed his store into an Indian motorcycle showroom, and in 1927, he moved the business to Stapleton. It was also in the 1920s that he struck up a relationship with the Harley-Davidson brand. In 1932, the operation was relocated to its present address at 440-442 Bay ST., Stapleton

Frank died in May 1968 at the age of 88. When his son, Michael, died in 1976, Micheal's wife Anne, and their son, Michael Jr., assumed ownership of the shop. Anne retired in 1996.

Today, the business continues a true family enterprise, with one of the most recent additions being Michael Jr.'s wife, Karen. She has just recently got involved in the business, and is taking care of marketing, and supervising our fashion and collectibles boutique, called 'Motorclothes' said her husband.

Other family members include the Lombardi's sons Michael, 16, and Matthew, 14, who are being introduced to the business, and their nephew, Mark Crescitelli.

“He’s my right hand man.” The owner said of his nephew. “He helped me bring our business to its present level.” It also has been commonplace for the enterprise to be fueled with help from other extended-family members, Mike Jr. said. “Through the years, there were so many of our cousins and friends that worked,” he said. “I come from a big family. They’d put in a year or two sweeping floors, putting bicycles together, or delivering for us while they were waiting for more permanent jobs,” he said. “Bicycles go back even further than that with my father. I remember stories he used to tell me about people renting them during the second World War.”

A centennial celebration is scheduled to take place at the Lombardi’s Harley-Davidson showroom on Saturday from 11 a.m to 4 p.m. In addition to special promotions and discounts, there will be live entertainment, food and refreshments. We will be holding a raffle and all of the proceeds will be donated to MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association),” Mike Jr. said. “And Mike Pugliese (of Todt Hill),... a winner of the discovery Channel’s Biker Build-off contest, will be present with one of his latest creations, and will sign autographs.’ Also noteworthy, he added is that Harley-Davidson 2006 models are on display. For additional information, Lombardi’s Harley-Davidson may be reached at (718) 447-4009, or via its Web site at [www.lombardi-hd.com](http://www.lombardi-hd.com).