

Angelo Lollino - Man of the Year



Angelo Lollino was born and raised in the specialty food business, roasting amazing coffee, award-winning gelato and great Italian food. The son of Giuseppe and Pina (Bruno) Lollino, Angelo grew up in Chicago in an Italian family that owned and operated Ristorante Italia and Caffè Italia for nearly 50 years. Angelo's father was a master coffee roaster and one of the first to introduce espresso in the U.S. through his wholesale coffee company and cafes that also served house-made artisan gelato and sorbetto.

As a teenager, Angelo began mastering the ins and outs of managing his family's restaurant, learning the intricacies of roasting fresh coffee and fostering a love for the art of making gelato. To perfect his gelato-making craft, he attended multiple training courses in Italy.

In the 1990s, Angelo began leading new business ventures. He and his brother Guy founded Fratelli Lollino Inc., a specialty coffee roasting company that later became Fratelli Coffee Company. Angelo and his wife, Giovanna, opened Massa Cafe Italiano in 1999, which features popular menu items that have been highlighted by the Chicago Tribune, Chicago magazine and the Food Network channel, to name a few. Massa has been a staple in Elmwood Park, celebrating 25 years this year.

In 2008, Angelo partnered with the President and CEO of Roundy's Supermarkets, Robert Mariano, to create the Vero Coffee & Gelato brand. The two have made their mark across the greater Chicago area, opening more than 40 Vero Coffee & Gelato locations inside of all the Mariano's grocery stores.

In addition, Angelo founded Alamode Foods Inc., a food service manufacturer of gelato, sorbetto, specialty coffee roasting and other fine specialty foods. Alamode services some of the most well-known Chicago restaurants, including Gibsons, Bar Siena, Gene & Georgetti, Rosebud and Nutella Cafe, and has partnered with established distributors nationwide, including Greco & Sons, Sysco, Lettieri and Euro USA.

In his latest venture, Angelo founded a frozen pizza line, Massa Pizza Company, in 2018. Angelo realized there was a gap in the market for a restaurant-quality, authentic, Sicilian pizza and wanted to be able to share his beloved recipe nationwide. The recipe dates back to his mom at Ristorante Italia, and became a staple recipe at Massa Café Italiano. Massa Pizza Company products can now be found across the United States in major grocery stores, and the company is quickly gaining traction in the highly competitive frozen pizza market.

The lessons and experience Angelo learned from an early age continue to influence his work now. With everything he does, he strives for the highest quality. When it comes to making gelato, he always uses the highest-quality ingredients and makes each flavor from scratch, fresh every day. When it comes to coffees and espressos, Angelo believes in sourcing the finest raw coffee beans from around the world, roasting them in small batches to ensure a consistently full-flavored and well-rounded taste.

Over the course of his 40-plus years of management-level food service and culinary experience, Angelo has garnered many accolades for his work and kitchen creations. In 2016, Angelo's Chicago Pot Hole gelato flavor was ranked No. 1 in America and second-best in the Americas at the Gelato World Tour qualifying rounds.

The ranking secured him an invite to the Gelato World Tour grand finale in Italy, where he was one of only 36 gelato artisans from around the globe competing for the official title of World's Best Gelato. At the event, Angelo's Cocco Sogno gelato flavor earned special recognition as the technical jury choice.

Angelo and his wife, Giovanna, have three adult children, Joey, Alisa and Giana. He lives in Elmwood Park and plays an active role in the community, serving in his 12th year in the public service sector as an elected Trustee in the Village of Elmwood Park.