

Edinburgh celebrates 40 years in business

Restaurant

✘ A popular Italian restaurant chain has been keeping people across Scotland's capital well fed for forty years, serving up a winning combination of top notch food and quality customer service. Vittoria on the Walk celebrates its landmark birthday this month, proving that the iconic family restaurant is still one of Edinburgh's favourite eateries, surviving the years to become as busy as ever.

From a small 50 cover venue, Vittoria has expanded over the years, not only with an extension to the original Leith Walk building increasing the venue size to 190 covers, but also with the opening of a second Vittoria outlet on George IV Bridge which opened in 2007.

In 1993 current owner Tony Crolla took over the venue in Leith Walk from his parents Alberto and Dina Crolla, who opened the restaurant with the simple aim to bring a little taste of Italy to Edinburgh's culinary scene. Originally Pompas Tea Rooms, Vittoria soon made a name for itself with its selection of traditional Italian food at an affordable price, becoming popular with a cross-spectrum of Edinburgh diners, from students, to professionals, to families.

Tony said: "It is fantastic that even after 40 years in the industry Vittoria is still going strong. The fact that we are still as popular as ever with diners across Edinburgh really shows the quality and longevity of our offering. Vittoria is a real family run restaurant and was founded by my parents in the seventies and I over took the business back in 1993, when they decided to retire. I originally started working at the restaurant on Leith walk washing dishes when I was 11 years

old and as I got older I became more involved. My parents were a real source of inspiration to me as the honest and hardworking way in which they ran their business was something that as an aspiring young businessman I really looked up to. Taking over the family business was both a daunting and exciting prospect and fortunately for me my parents were always on hand to give me all the help I needed – and they still are.

✘ “They were the ones who gave me the firepower in the beginning to make Vittoria the success it is today. Our aim is to be the flagship Italian restaurant group in Edinburgh – a real family restaurant that customers can trust”

Over the years, Vittoria has become something of a household name, with a following of dedicated customers who continue to come back to the restaurant time and time again.

Ronnie Robertson from Edinburgh has been a regular customer at Vittoria on the Walk for 40 years and remembers fondly visiting the restaurant with his family when he was younger. He believes that Vittoria’s appeal lies in the venue’s friendly and relaxing atmosphere and their traditional Italian food and drink offering.

He said: “You are always made to feel extremely welcome by Tony and his staff. He makes a real effort to get to know his customers and whenever he or his wife Angela is there, they always come over and say hello.

“Vittoria is the only venue in Scotland that offers the experience of a real Italian trattoria. It’s a family friendly place and always buzzing with conversation. It’s a place where people can go to relax, enjoy and talk over good food.”

As well as Vittoria on the Walk and Vittoria on the Bridge, Tony Crolla has expanded his Italian outlet chain, with three other venues across the capital – making him one of Edinburgh’s most renowned restaurateurs.

La Favorita, Edinburgh's first dedicated pizzeria opened on Leith Walk in 2005, winning a string of top industry awards including an AA Rosette, for its log fired pizzas and fresh quality ingredients. Earlier this year, Tony opened café/snack bar Taste of Italy also on Leith Walk and Divino Enoteca; a wine bar dedicated to fine Italian wines on Merchant Street in the city's Old Town.

And the restaurant experience doesn't just end at the doors of Tony's venues. In May this year, Tony embarked on a social media campaign and became the first Italian restaurant in Scotland to launch facebook and twitter pages, for Vittoria and La Favorita.

The pages not only provide a wealth of information about the restaurants such as the latest news, events and offers, the pages provide a platform on which customers can also make suggestions and improvements, providing the ultimate dining experience.

As a thank you to all Vittoria's loyal customers, the restaurants launched a special Tony's Tuesday campaign, which offer's social media followers 2 for 1 on all main courses every Tuesday and so far has proven a success with over 300 covers in just a couple of months.

Looking to the future, a series of refurbishments are planned at both Vittoria on the Walk and Vittoria on the Bridge for the New Year, giving the restaurants a new lease of life.

Tony adds: "Both venues have been round for a while and are looking a little tired. With a lick of paint and a few changes here and there we are hoping to bring them right back up to date.

"The New Year is the perfect opportunity for us to revamp our offering and make what we've always had even better – allowing our customers to get the most out of our restaurants."

More information about Vittoria or any of Tony Crolla's outlets can be found at www.vittoriarestaurant.com or on their facebook page (www.facebook.com/Vittoria) and twitter page (www.twitter.com/eatvittoria)