



**DAVE**  
**Caporale's**  
**BAKERY, INC.**

## Allegany County's Oldest Continuously Owned and Operated Family Business

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**Augusto**

**David**

**August "Gus"**

**Dave**

**CAPORALE'S BAKERY — FOUR GENERATIONS**

Dave Caporale's Bakery is one of western Maryland's most recognized business names. In fact, one would be hard pressed to find a resident who is unfamiliar with the family business that has enjoyed a dedicated customer base for generations. Caporale's Italian bread is almost a requirement for family gatherings, particularly when out-of-town relatives return home for special events. Caporale's has always been around—or so it seems. The bakery's founding is a fascinating story that began with an early twentieth century voyage aboard a cargo ship.

The 4,500 mile sea voyage from Italy to America while lodged in a steerage compartment must have been an unpleasant experience for 24 year old Augusto Caporale. And it is likely he had second thoughts about leaving Notaresco, a village with close personal relationships and familiar surroundings. Boarding the "Roma" in 1903 required courage, particularly when the resources to establish himself in America totaled 16 United States dollars.

Augusto Caporale arrived at Ellis Island in April 1903—a scene repeated 12 million times at that port of entry. During the early 20th century immigrants could enter without a passport, visa, or other papers and be on their way in a matter of hours upon passing basic health screenings.

According to family tradition, Augusto cleared the screenings and headed to 89<sup>th</sup> Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where family members had previously settled. No one is certain why Augusto departed Philadelphia and made his way to Allegany County, Maryland, but records show that he was living in south Cumberland three years later, a time of major economic expansion in the city. Caporale's date the bakery's founding to Augusto's arrival in 1906.

Augusto established himself on West Third Street in south Cumberland, an area once referred to as "Little Italy." Many of the dwellings and several businesses in that area, including Caporale's Bakery, were Italian owned. Neighborhood



**Top:** Sally's Dance Studio on West Third Street, Cumberland, now occupies the location of Augusto Caporale's original bakery.

**Inset:** This metal plaque on Sally's Dance Studio building commemorates the original Caporale Italian Bakery.

**Left:** David Caporale with his sister, Tina, outside the West Third Street bakery about 1956.



families included Scarpelli, Cifala, Panone, Perlozzo, Lisanti, Marilnelli, and LaGrata.

Augusto married Maria DeMartino and the couple successfully raised their children while growing the bakery business. August "Gus" Caporale, grandson to the founder, readily recalls the original bakery on West Third Street because he

began working there at an early age with David Caporale, his father. "Dad provided a wooden box for me to stand on, so I could roll dough. We used an old wood burning oven with dirt piled on top. The dirt helped to keep the heat inside the oven. Dad and I placed the rolls in a pan with a peel, and then loaded them into the oven. After the rolls were finished, we loaded them onto cloth towels that were laid in a box. I still remember how the rolls and bread tasted coming from the wood burning oven—they had a unique flavor!"





**Cindy, Gus, and their son Joe, outside the 153 North Mechanic Street location.**

David Caporale relocated the business to LaVale and operated under the name Dave Caporale's Italian Bakery. His untimely passing in 1973 brought Gus into the business. "Dad passed at age 48, and that is when I stepped in. I served two years in the Navy, but came back to help dad at the bakery."

Over the years other family members associated with the bakery business eventually led to the creation of a separate Caporale business in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Felix, Dave Caporale's brother, owned and operated the Pennsylvania bakery that remained separate from the local business.

An ongoing business relationship with Bob D'Atri, well known local restaurant owner, developed over the years. According to Gus, "My dad taught Bob the bakery business.



**Cindy and Gus**

Bob later owned D'Atris sub shop and we supplied the rolls."

Gus and wife Cindy raised their children in the same positive work environment that the two previous generations experienced. Although the business moved to 153 North Mechanic Street in 1982, time honored traditions kept the entrepreneurial spirit alive.

After more than three decades in the business, Gus and Cindy turned over responsibilities to their eldest son, Dave, making Caporales a fourth generation enterprise. While the parents continue to provide assistance and guidance, it is Dave who is the keeper of tradition and owner of the business. The family work ethic has enabled





Top: Gus, Cindy, and their son Dave, current owner of the bakery.

Right: Caporale's Bakery has always been a family affair with everyone helping as needed, especially during the Christmas rush. Gus and Cindy's four sons all worked in the bakery at various times. Left to right: Current owner, Dave, Brian, Dad Gus, Joe, and Tony. In front is Cindy's Dad, John Divico.

PHOTOS ON THESE TWO PAGES PROVIDED BY THE CAPORALE FAMILY.







**Top:** Left to right, James Powell, Dave Caporale and Brett Blanco scaling dough for hoagie buns.

**Inset:** Dave maintains consistency in their products by always using the same code numbers of the ingredients that go into their dough.

**Bottom:** Mark Stonebreaker, daylight manager, smiles as he greets customers at the bakery counter. *PHOTO BY MIKE CALHOUN*

him to not only manage the bakery, but also serve one term on the city council and currently as a county commissioner.

While acknowledging running a business is hard work, Dave also realizes its benefits. “I spent time at the bakery growing up. During my elementary years at Saint Patrick’s School, I would often walk to the store after dismissal and work the cash register. Later, I attended Frostburg State University and would work when I could. And the customers I saw then are still stopping by the store today. We have a generational customer base that remains loyal.”

Dave also notes it is rewarding to see former residents who have moved from the area. “They will stop by to see us and say ‘We can’t buy bread like this where we live now.’”

Today, Dave Caporale’s Inc. could be described as a regional bakery with 90% of the business realized within Maryland and the remainder divided between Pennsylvania and West Virginia.





What makes Caporale's bread so special? Cindy Caporale notes that part of the answer is, "What we don't put in the bread. We stay away from artificial ingredients."

Dave states the recipe is unique, "We used the trial and error method and family tradition to develop the recipe. Now we strive for consistency, so a thermostat is important to the baking process. In the past, bread was checked by sight and feel."

To maintain consistency, care is taken to purchase the same ingredients. Even differences in code numbers on products may affect the final product, and Caporale customers are quick to notice any changes. One major change occurred in recent years when the traditional hard crust was replaced with a softer one.

While bread is Caporale's primary offerings, they also sell pepperoni rolls, sub rolls, hamburger rolls, and a variety of specialty products. One highly anticipated seasonal item is Christmas Stollen, a fruit-filled bread in the form of a folded over roll.

Tradition, a positive work ethic, and management skills have contributed to the Caporale's success over the decades. As Dave notes, "It is really nice to look back on what we have accomplished as a family. It is hard to explain, but the bakery business becomes part of you. And it is really rewarding to hear how much customers like our bread. Some customers say Caporale's bread is a must when eating a spaghetti dinner. We are pleased that our bread means so much to folks."



**Christmas Stollen, a fruit-filled bread, is one of Caporale's specialty products.**

**Top: Brett getting pan bread ready to be baked.**

**Middle: James putting loaves of bread into the oven.**

**Bottom: Brett putting dough into the machine for cutting into pieces for rolls/buns and Dave with prepared pieces for the rolling machine.**

