

# Memory Lane

EXPLORE THE PAST OF DOWNTOWN HAMILTON

VIEW MORE  
PROPERTIES  
HERE

## Capri

23 and 25 John Street North, which were listed as 17 John Street North before 1890, housed Young & Brother, plumbers and wholesale dealers of oil lamps, gas-fixtures and steam-fittings, for approximately 20 years. Young & Brother were established in 1845 and were located at multiple locations on John Street North for nearly half a century, including 28-30 John Street North until the late 1860s and 23-25 John Street North from the 1868 to the late 1890s.

23-25 John Street North housed a series of wholesale confectioners and hardware stores throughout the 20th century, such as Alexander Hardware Company in the 1920s, and was converted to a restaurant by the late-20th century.

Elena and Bruno Cariolato opened the Capri Restaurant in November of 1963. The pizza was so popular there were line-ups almost every night. A pizza man was stationed right in the front window making the pizzas for everyone to see. The Capri trademark - the little dough ball in the middle of every pizza – has been a tradition since the beginning.

Anna Fiorino started working in the kitchen in the late 60's. She was just a teenager who needed the job and also happened to love cooking. Most of the dishes you see today were inspired by her family from Calabria, Italy. Anna can still be found in the back cooking with her husband Genaro helping out. Since 2004, the Fiorino family have owned and managed the restaurant.

Upstairs above the restaurant lies the famous Blue Grotto. The original owner Bruno decided to renovate the second floor and made it resemble a cave like the Blue Grotto in the Capri Islands. This unique space featured ceilings and walls transformed into concrete stalactites and even a flowing river through the middle of the floor with fish swimming around. The grotto featured its own bar, stage and dance floor. Food, dancing and live entertainment were on the menu. The grotto later became home to the Hamilton Press Club and then a comedy club. The cave was closed until November 9th 2014, when it was re-opened once more.

continued...



The back of the Capri Restaurant building in 1961.

# Capri ...continued



Capri owner Sal Fiorino (standing) with his parents Anna and Jerry, in the renovated Blue Grotto.



A view of John Street North at King William Street in 1971. The Beautyland sign on the corner was later repurposed to become the Capri sign.