

The Vespers' Trial Cookbook

*ITALIANO CUCINA RUSTICA
WITH TRIAL TIPS FOR LAWYERS*

A COOKBOOK FOR TRIAL LAWYERS

By "THE COOKIN' COUSINS"

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DEDICATION

There is an Italian saying: “AT THE TABLE ONE DOES NOT GROW OLD.” When we stop and think of all the good times and endless moments of joy we have had with our families and friends, it has proven true. As long as we take the time to remember those whose chairs are now empty, then our family, our centuries’ old traditions, and our Southern Italian recipes will never grow old.

This book is dedicated to our parents and Italian forebears.

Tom and I grew up in the Italian section of Camden, New Jersey. We both have fond memories, especially of our family and many family dinners. Our grandparents came to the United States in the early 1900s from La Provincias (provinces) of Campobasso in the Regions of Abruzzi-Molise for the Nicolellas and Gallos and Bassilacata for the Vespers. The Nicolellas—Tom’s mom, Carmella *nee* Nicolella, and her family—are from Riccia; and the Gallos—Dom’s mom, Carmella *nee* Gallo, and her family—are from the next hill-town on the next hill over to the east of Riccia, named Gambatesa, in Southeastern Italy closer to the Adriatic than the Tyrrhenian Sea. The Vespers—Tom’s dad, Rocco, and Dom’s dad, Ferdinand—are from another even smaller town of Accettura, atop another hill with only two dirt roads (goat paths?) up and down. The Vesper side, whose name was originally Vespe, comes from the “South West” or the Toe of The Boot of Italy.

[GEOGRAPHIC NOTE: Italy’s 1948 Consitution created 20 “Regions” or “Regiones,” which are the first-level administrative divisions of Italy, i.e., autonomous entities with powers defined by the Constitution. Each region (except for the Aosta Valley) is divided into provinces, and there are 110 provincias, each with its own capital city or “citta.” In Italy, a province is an administrative division between a city or municipality (comune) and a region (regione).]

Just to make it challenging, if you use a road map or atlas (which we had to on our several “road trips” through every region and most provincias d’Italia), “città” refers to big cities like Roma, Milano, and Napoli; smaller cities like Genova, Firenze, Torino, Bologna, Ferrara, etc.; and even the tiniest towns like Accettura, Riccia, Gambatesa, Portofino, Taormina, etc.; there is also a “comune” like “*Il comune di Accettura*” or “*Il comune di Portofino*,” etc. A commune is Italy’s basic unit of local government like a township or municipality in the USA.

In short, a “città” is also a “comune” but not always; but, “communes” are always a “città” because in Italy, there are some villages (not towns) that are local government units and therefore called “comuni” as in, e.g., “*comune di Pedesina*” (province of Sondrio, region Lombardia) with only 33 residents in an area of a few square miles.

Therefore, to be geographically pluperfect, Accettura is a tiny town and comune in the Province of Matera, in the Southern Region of Basilicata, 21 miles northwest of the Region’s capital of Potenza, with a population of about 2,000 (not counting livestock); Riccia is a comune in the Province of Campobasso in the Region Molise,

DEDICATION

located about nine miles southeast of the Region's capital citta, Campobasso (see the overlap of names?). Gambatesa is a comune (municipality) in Provincia de Campobasso in the Region Molise, 12 miles southeast of Campobasso, and only one mile (as crows fly, NOT as cars wind up/down hills on narrow "roads"), with 1,654 residents within 26 sq. miles. Simply put: we are Southern Italians.

IN MEMORIAM

Dennis Vesper

(Born 1955 whom God called to Himself 2006)



Dennis Vesper, Ferdinand "Freddie" Vesper, Annette Vesper, and Dominic Vesper

IN MEMORIAM

(Ferdinand Vesper, Sr. & Rocco Vesper)

IN MEMORIAM

(Dominic "Tom" Vesper 1883 - 1967)

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Grandfather Domenico Antonio Vespe

Tom and I were both named after our paternal grandfather. Now how did that happen? Well, let me explain. Our grandfather, Domenico Antonio Vespe, came to the United States in 1902 and settled in South Philadelphia with his sister Magdalena. Eventually, he moved “cross the river” (across the Delaware River) to the City of Camden, New Jersey, and was married to Giovannina Mattei and had seven children.

Dominic, as he liked to be called, unsuccessfully applied for many jobs in Camden, but he was very interested in working for the Pennsylvania Railroad, which was paying good wages at the time. However, he was denied employment at a Pennsylvania Rail Yard in South Camden because the Railroad at that time was not hiring Italians, but our grandfather was a very determined and resourceful man. He went to a “Pennsy” rail yard in North Camden, this time telling them his name was Thomas Vesper (with French accent to it). The Railroad hired him immediately; and thus, he was known as Tom and our family’s last name was and forever will be Vesper (pronounced with no French “airs” or “heir” to the end—just an “ER” like in cook-ER or lawy-ER).

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Our gratitude is expressed to our mothers, who are both deceased but whose culinary inspirations have stayed in our hearts and memories forever: Carmella nee Gallo Vesper and Carmella nee Nicollela Vesper.

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