

OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/JAMIE LEE

Towne Deli & Pizzeria in Tottenville has been a neighborhood favorite for almost four decades. A recent renovation pays tribute to the community's past, while updating the interior for today's customers.

T-ville fixture gets a face-lift

The redesign of Towne Deli looks fresh and new, but is rooted in the neighborhood's past

By **JAMIE LEE**
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TOTTENVILLE — After nearly four decades of serving the Tottenville neighborhood, Towne Deli & Pizzeria has undergone a facelift.

That doesn't mean its owners have forgotten the past. Quite the contrary: They've embraced it.

The public portion of the restaurant is evenly divided into a shining display area and a bright, new seating space.

The real eye-catching changes aren't the four flat screen televisions, but an imposing, old-fashioned wall clock and dozens of black-and-white framed photographs.

The phrase "Welcome to Tottenville" surrounds the over-sized clock, mounted above one of the booths; the other walls are filled with clas-

sic prints, depicting turn-of-the-century Tottenville.

"We really wanted to make this into a nice setting with an old town dining feel to it," said owner **Charles Polizzotto**. "We play music from the 1950s, and the photographs give a real nostalgic atmosphere to the place."

Paying homage to the past is important to Polizzotto and his wife, **Rosemarie**.

After all, it was her parents, **John and Phyllis Catania**, who first opened the eatery in 1971.

Over the years, the husband-and-wife team — whose picture hangs in the dining room, nearest the front counter — built up a solid customer following, mixing quality food at affordable prices.

In 1991, the Catantias turned the reins over to their daughter and son-in-law, who took a simi-

lar approach to running the business.

The building that houses the delicatessen dates back to the time that some of the photographs, now hanging inside, were originally taken.

"It was just time for a renovation," said Polizzotto, careful to note that pricing and food preparation haven't been altered. "We did it mainly just to take care of the building and its overall structure."

While the nuts-and-bolts work was being done by J. Smith Construction, Mrs. Polizzotto and her friend, **Barbara Smith** — ironically, the wife of the contractor — were paging through Historic Richmondtown archives, searching for the photographs.

"The people that have come in absolutely love it," said Polizzotto, who added that customers haven't stopped commenting on the new ambience.

As Tottenville residents themselves, the Polizzottos are thrilled with the new look of their restaurant, a place they hope to one day turn over to their three children — **Victor**, 10, **Dominique**, 9, and **Charlie**, 3.

"It's almost like an extreme make-over," said Polizzotto. "But we feel like it has really enhanced the beauty of the place and our reputation as a family-style, neighborhood restaurant. We really couldn't ask for more."

— Towne Deli & Pizzeria, open seven days a week, is located at 5373 Arthur Kill Rd., Tottenville. Customers can call 718-227-1985, or visit www.townedelipizzeria.com for regular and catering menus. Free delivery is also available.

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