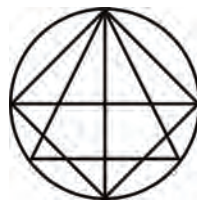


# *Laurina's Kitchen*

**GENERATIONS OF HEIRLOOM DISHES  
FROM THE ECOBELLI FAMILY**

**LORA LEE ECOBELLI  
& TOM ECOBELLI**



SQUARE CIRCLE PRESS  
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# Laurina's Kitchen: Generations of Heirloom Dishes From the Ecobelli Family

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# Laurina's Kitchen

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### SALADS

ECOBELLI CHEF'S SALAD small .55 medium 1.40 large 1.75  
 HEARTS OF LETTUCE with Regular Dressing .75  
 COTTAGE CHEESE served on Lettuce .55  
 SLICED TOMATO .50  
 HEARTS OF LETTUCE with Fresh Dressing .55  
 SLICED TOMATO AND LETTUCE .55

*Regular Dressing on Salads - 25¢ Extra A La Carte*



### A La Carte SPAGHETTI & MACARONI

*Cooked to Order, Admit Expresso or Salt*

BAKED STUFFED SHELLS with Meat Balls 1.85  
 MANICOTTI with Meat Balls 1.85  
 BAKED LASAGNE 1.90  
 SPAGHETTI CARUSO (Chicken Livers, Mushrooms) 2.00  
 SPAGHETTI with Butter Sauce 1.50  
 WITH SAUCE 1.50  
 WITH MEAT BALLS 1.75  
 WITH SAUSAGE 1.85  
 WITH MARINARA SAUCE 1.65  
 WITH OLIVE OIL AND GARLIC 1.65  
 WITH ANCHOVIES, OLIVE OIL AND GARLIC 1.75  
 WITH MUSHROOM SAUCE 1.85  
 WITH PEPPERS 1.85  
 WITH MEAT SAUCE 1.85  
 WITH WHITE or RED CLAW SAUCE 2.00  
 ZITA WITH SAUCE 1.60  
 WITH MEAT BALLS 1.85  
 WITH SAUSAGE 1.95  
 SICILIAN STYLE (Ricotta Cheese and Eggplant) 2.00  
 RAVIOLA WITH SAUCE 1.60  
 WITH MEAT BALLS 1.80  
 WITH SAUSAGE 1.90  
 EGG PLANT PARMIGIANA, Salad, Potato or Spaghetti  
*Plant Bottle Imported Wine Serves Five - 2.50*

### SANDWICHES

(SERVED AFTER DINNER HOUR)

HOT MEAT BALL .80 HOT SAUSAGE .90  
 SALAMI .65 PROVOLONE .70  
 HAMBURGER .75 CHEESEBURGER .85  
 HAM .65 HAM AND CHEESE .75  
 CHEESE .55 GRILLED CHEESE .70  
 BACON, LETTUCE, TOMATO .75 SLICED CHICKEN .85  
 LETTUCE AND TOMATO .60 CLUB SPECIAL 1.50  
 TOAST .05 extra

### KIDDIE KORNER

(75¢ Extra Charge for Adults)

SPAGHETTI with Meat Ball .90  
 ZITA with Meat Ball 1.00  
 ONE PORK CHOP, French Fries and Salad 1.50  
 ONE LAMB CHOP, French Fries and Salad 1.75  
 HAMBURGER, French Fries and Salad 1.25  
 MEAT BALLS, French Fries and Salad 1.25  
 VEAL CUTLET, French Fries and Salad 1.50

### APPETIZERS & RELISHES

SHRIMP COCKTAIL 1.25 CELERY AND OLIVES .85  
 SMALL ANTIPASTO 1.75 PROVOLONE & CRACKERS .85  
 LARGE ANTIPASTO 2.50 TOMATO JUICE .35  
 FRUIT CUP .60 ORANGE JUICE .35  
 TOP NECK CLAMS 1.00

### BROILED STEAK AND CHOPS

A La Carte	Full Dinner
ONE INCH CLUB STEAK	9.00 6.00
FILET MIGNON	5.75 6.75
PORK CHOPS with Apple Sauce	3.50 4.50
LAMB CHOPS with Meat Jelly	4.00 5.00
CHOPPED SIRLOIN STEAK	3.25 4.25
OPEN STEAK SANDWICH on Toast	3.75 4.75
HOOF and SURF	3.00 7.00
SCALLOPING OF BEEF TENDERLOIN	3.75 4.75
SIRLOIN for TWO	8.50 10.50

*Above Served with Spaghetti or Potato and Salad*

*Service Charge for Extra Place Settings for Adults 75¢*



### SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN

A La Carte	Full Dinner
3.50	4.50



### FRIED SHRIMP

with Cocktail Sauce

A La Carte	Full Dinner
3.50	4.50

*During Rush Hours Please Allow Extra Time For Your Pizza to be Prepared*

*Thank you.*

*Sandwiches and Pizza Not Served in Banquet Room.*

### NEW YORK CUT SIRLOIN STEAK

A La Carte	Full Dinner
5.50	6.50

### CHICKEN

A La Carte	Full Dinner
6.00	7.00
6.25	7.25
3.75	4.75
3.50	4.50
3.75	4.75
3.75	4.75
4.00	5.00
3.50	4.50

*Above Served with Spaghetti or Potato and Salad*

### SEAFOOD

A La Carte	Full Dinner
6.00	7.00
6.25	7.25
3.75	4.75
3.50	4.50
3.75	4.75
3.75	4.75
4.00	5.00

(FRIDAY AND LENTEN SPECIALS ONLY)

SHRIMP MARINARA, Sauce Shrimp, Mushrooms in Marinara	3.75	4.75
SHRIMP A LA CACCIATORE, Sauce Shrimp with Peppers, Onion and Mushrooms in Marinara Sauce with Wine	4.00	5.00
FRIED FILET OF HADDOCK	2.75	3.75
DEEP FRIED BREADED OYSTERS	3.25	4.25
COMBINATION SEAFOOD PLATE	3.75	4.75

*Above Served with Spaghetti or Potato and Salad*

### VEAL

A La Carte	Full Dinner
3.50	4.50
3.75	4.75
3.50	4.50
3.75	4.75
3.75	4.75
3.75	4.75
3.75	4.75
3.75	4.75

*Above Served with Spaghetti or Potato and Salad*

### PIZZA PIE

MOZZARELLA (Cheese)	1.50	2.00
SAUSAGE	1.75	2.50
MUSHROOMS	1.85	2.50
ANCHOVIES	1.85	2.50
HALF A HALF ABOVE	1.85	2.50
COMBINATION OF ABOVE	2.00	2.50
ECOBELLI'S SPECIAL	2.25	3.00

### DESSERTS

SPUMONI	.50
RIGUOLE TORTONI	.60
ICE CREAM, Vanilla or Chocolate	.35
HOMI MADE FRUIT PIE, Fresh	.35
PIE A LA MODE	.45
LAYER CAKE	.30
LAYER CAKE & LA MODE	.45
MELON IN SEASON	.45
MELON WITH ICE CREAM	.85
PARFAITS PLAIN	.80

### BEVERAGES

SANKA DE MESCAGE	.15
COFFEE	.15
ITALIAN DEMITASSE, For an Request	.30
ALL SOFT DRINKS, Glass	.15
CUP OF TEA	.15
ICED TEA	.35
ICED COFFEE	.35
MILK	.15

### COCKTAILS

Whiskey Sour	85¢
Martini	80¢
Manhattan	80¢

### CRASSHOPPER

PINK SQUIRREL	.85
TAM O'SHANTER SPECIAL	.70
ALEXANDER	.85
ALEXANDER	.90
BACARDI	.80
COFFEE COCKTAIL	.85
CUBA LIBRE	.80
DAIQUIRI - PLAIN	.80
DUBONNET	.80
GIN RICKY	.75
JOHN COLLINS	.75
SOUTHERN COMFORT MANHATTAN	.85
OLD FASHIONED	.85
PINK LADY	.85
SLOE GIN FIZZ	.80
TOM COLLINS	.80
WARD EIGHT	.80
ROB ROY	.90
SIDE CAR	.85
SINGAPORE SLING	.85
ORANGE BLOSSOM	.75

A full spread from the vintage Ecobelli's menu shown at top left on the opposite page.

# *A Note from the Publisher*

IN DECEMBER OF 2011 Don Rittner, Schenectady County Film Commissioner, contacted me about a film project and asked if I would be interested in publishing the companion cookbook. He put me in touch with Lora Lee and Tom Ecobelli, the brother and sister team who co-wrote both the movie, *Chickadee*, and this cookbook. After discussing their book project with them, I knew right away that I wanted to publish it. I had been looking for a cookbook manuscript for Square Circle Press for some time, but I didn't want to publish a typical cookbook. From their manuscript and their presentation, I could see that Ecobelli's wasn't just a restaurant, but rather it had been an Upstate New York institution. This, coupled with their grandmother Laurina's personal story outlined in their movie project, indicated to me that this was indeed something extraordinary, and that it fit well into our publishing mission of upstate history and culture.

While there used to be many more than there are today, Upstate New York was once dotted with family-run Italian restaurants, and you could find one in almost every sizable village or city. Though many that still exist have gone through modernizations and new ownership, there are some that retain their original charm, both architecturally and socially. A few that come to my mind that I have dined in are Moretti's in Elmira, Petta's in Schenectady, Parillo's in Amsterdam, and Lombardo's in Albany.

My own Italian restaurant memories are of Sorge's Restaurant in my hometown of Corning. I remember various family celebrations there, and the dark wooden booths that ran parallel to the lunch counter where generations of Crystal City residents have eaten. Although the restaurant recently burned and was refurbished, the food is still the same as I remember, and I still go there when I can for a small plate of spaghetti and red sauce, topped with a meatball and a sausage. When I think of Italian food, I think of Sorge's.

Lora Lee and Tom possessed an enormous amount of material from their family's restaurant — photos, menus, memorabilia — and memories. But because Ecobelli's was a regional icon, we knew there had to be more out there, and, with the help of Ann Hauprich, we engaged in a publicity campaign to solicit and obtain more materials from the public at large. The response was overwhelming, for such memories of the food from places like Ecobelli's and Sorge's are extremely difficult to erase from one's mind. These restaurants are deeply embedded within the culture — and the very psyche — of Upstate New York and its people.

It took a good deal of time to collect, organize, and compile all the materials into this book, and, as any foodie knows, a good presentation is important. The inspiration for the design and layout of this book came directly from the vintage Ecobelli's menu shown on the previous page. I loved its retro style and typesetting, and holding it in my hands provided a feeling of nostalgia that I wanted to capture — including some of the "homemade" or "amateurish" charm of the printing and design.

Many of the images do not bear captions. While some speak for themselves, other do not, and as anyone who has tried to research their family history knows, often times a generation will pass before the historical information is shared, and is sometimes lost. Anyone with more information about a photo is invited to contact the authors and share what they know.

The family recipes were passed down orally to Lora Lee and Tom, so those former customers still around who are looking to duplicate the exact Ecobelli taste that they remember are encouraged to experiment with the recipes, and we wish you success. But what we know *will* satisfy them is this big, heaping plate of memories.

Richard Vang  
Square Circle Press

# *Laurina & Her Kitchen*

LAURINA INZINNA WAS BORN in the United States in 1906. Her parents, Michelina and Salvatore, had emigrated to America from Collesano, Sicily. While Laurina was still an infant, Salvatore died, leaving the family destitute. Laurina and her older sister Elizabeth were placed into the Mother Cabrini Catholic Orphanage in Hoboken, New Jersey. After several years Michelina remarried and was able to reclaim her children. Her new husband moved the family to upstate New York to work in the textile mills. Unfortunately, Laurina's stepfather became increasingly abusive and Laurina found herself the center of a landmark domestic violence trial. Drawing upon an inner strength beyond her years, Laurina bravely defied the odds and brought her abusive stepfather to justice. (More information about this incident in Laurina's life and the movie *Chickadee* is presented on page 100.)

Our grandfather Donata (Dan) Ecobelli was from a little town in Italy called Benevento. He was a merchant seaman who traveled the world and was an excellent musician who played many instruments. In 1923 he married our grandmother, Laurina (Laura) Inzinna. They lived in Hoboken, New Jersey while raising their two children Raphelo (Ralph) and Clementine (Clem). In Hoboken our grandfather ran a small shoe shop until the Mafia, then called The Black Hand, threatened him if he did not give them protection money. When he refused, they threw a molotov cocktail through the shop window, burning it to the ground. Left with nothing, my grandfather went off to sea with the merchant marines and Laurina went to work in a sweat shop in New York City.

When our father, Ralph Ecobelli, returned from the service in 1946, the family decided to return to upstate New York, where Laurina's sister had been running Sam Pepe's restaurant in Amsterdam. Our grandparents began looking for a place of their own, and in 1947, somehow managed to scrape together enough money to buy a rundown Scottish tavern in Ballston Spa called The Tam O'Shanter Inn. "The Tam," as it was known in town, was the favorite watering hole of down-and-out bookies and gamblers heading to the Saratoga Race Track. Our grandfather was superstitious after his exchange with The Black Hand and decided not to change the name. Hence it was forever called, "Ecobelli's Tam O'Shanter Inn." It was a strange mix and a mouthful to say, but no one seemed to mind.

Knowing nothing about the tavern business, our family dove in head first. Our grandfather, being a very gregarious person, tended bar and entertained customers with his mandolin playing and lively stories. Our father, his sister Clem, and her husband Tony pitched in as a team and did whatever needed to be done. When Laurina cooked meals for the family in the tiny back kitchen, she always shared whatever it was with the tavern customers and it wasn't long before word spread about her delicious food. In a matter of months the roadside pub had become the most popular place to be.

Our father Ralph partnered with his parents and became an accomplished chef. He took over cooking duties in the evening and Laurina worked the day shift. Soon they expanded the tavern into a full blown restaurant. They really had no choice, since crowds of townspeople were filling the tiny tavern to capacity every night.

Over the years, the little tavern grew and grew. An enlarged kitchen, banquet center, and second story were added in the '50s and '60s, and the staff expanded to over 40 workers, consisting of aunts, uncles, cousins, and various neighborhood kids who needed a job. Many loyal employees stayed with our family for over 30 years. Everyone was treated like family and each night before work, our grandmother prepared a sit-down dinner for the entire staff so they could share a meal. To reward the employees for their hard work and loyalty, our father implemented a profit-sharing plan, one of the first in the area.

Not only was "The Tam" known for excellent home-cooked food, but also its warm and friendly atmosphere. Laurina's generosity was legendary. She fed numerous families over the years that were

going through hard times and they never forgot her acts of kindness. To this day, generations of people remember her and the “The Tam” fondly as a favorite place for special occasions and holiday dinners.

Together with their children and extended family, Laurina and Dan had transformed the local Scottish tavern into one of the region’s premier and most popular Italian restaurants. Ecobelli’s Tam O’Shanter Inn was written up by *Gourmet* magazine, *Golden Press Cookbook*, and *Duncan Hines*, as well as several local and regional publications. It was also a charter member of World Famous Restaurants International and a member of the National Restaurant Association of America.

Laurina and Dan traveled extensively in Italy and Europe, and along with the traditional recipes that they already knew, they incorporated some of the recipes that they found on their travels into the menu and made them their own.

Eventually, Ralph took over as president and chef and with his unique twists on Laurina’s original recipes, the restaurant continued to grow. Ralph employed such innovations as a “non-smokers” night, restaurant gift certificates, and a series of radio spots and newspaper ads featuring staff — and long-time, loyal customers — with their photos, bios and favorite Ecobelli dishes. Dan passed away, and as Laurina grew older she slowed down a bit, but she still prepared her signature dishes and remained a vital part of the ongoing day-to-day operations.

The business was sold in 1979 to Joe and Tony Iaia, a pair of brothers in the restaurant business in Schenectady, but our family retained a lifetime of friends and memories. Our father retired, but Laurina continued to do prep work for the new owners, including making a huge pot of minestra every Wednesday as a weekly special for the customers still loyal to her and her delicious food. She wasn’t getting paid. She just couldn’t resist helping out. That truly exemplifies who she was.

Laurina passed away in 1981, but her legacy lives on. She remains famous not only for her recipes, but even more for her hospitality, her generosity, and service to her community.





# Pizza Memories

The Tam was known far and wide for its pizza, and generations ordered a pie every Friday night from Ecobelli's. When I moved to New York City at 18, I was appalled at the doughy, bland pizza I found there. Only when I went to visit my grandfather's birth place in Benevento, Italy did I find the sort of heavenly pizza I had grown up with: a crispy, thin-crust Neapolitan-style with spicy sauce, homemade sausage and toppings.

Our family took great pride in the ingredients they used in their pizza. Several times a week they made hundreds of pounds of homemade sausage for the pizza and other dishes. They ground all the meat and spices themselves, and on the days they were making sausage, you could smell the aroma all through the neighborhood.

I graduated to making pizzas when I was about ten. I learned the ropes from my grandmother's helpers Anna and Janet. I wasn't allowed to use the brick oven yet, but I helped to make the dough in a huge mixer that was bigger than me. Instead of play dough, I had pizza dough to play with. What more could a kid want? If there is one thing I really miss from my childhood, it is a slice of Laurina's "special" pizza with sausage, black olives, peppers and mushrooms — a taste that was truly sublime. ~ Lora Lee

I wish I had a picture of the pizza-making area. Above the big bread board in front of the pizza oven were dozens of handmade posters of all of the pizza "milestones," such as:

DATE	Tue	wed	Thur	Fri	SAT	Total
Sept 19-23	45	34	46	102	111	338
Sept 26-30	39	42	53	124	125	383
Oct 3-7	41	35	34	133	135	378
Oct 10-14	32	25	38	114	121	329
Oct 17-21	25	40	26	113	125	329
Oct 24-28	41	30	46	148	117	382
Oct 31-Nov 4	29	43	42	87	163	304
Nov 7-11	36	28	38	111	146	359
Nov 14-18	9	37	22	118	118	304
Nov 21-25	52	69	thanks dining	69	127	319
Nov 28-Dec 2	30	30	23	112	116	311
Dec 5-9	44	39	30	66	94	273
Dec 12-16	34	37	57	48	71	246
Dec 19-23	63	69	44	97	129	304/35
Dec 26-30	37	38	48	95	152	370
Merry XMAS 1973			HAPPY New Year			
Jan 6	22	30	26	95	112	285
Jan 9-13	40	21	34	114	118	327
Jan 16-20	38	29	29	127	94	317
Jan 23-27	20	44	32	137	103	336
Jan 30-Feb 3	27	25	20	117	91	280
Feb 6-10	20	36	39	130	85	310
Feb 13-17	22	30	49	113	105	319
Feb 20-24	32	39	42	95	92	300
Feb 27-Mar 3	30	28	39	90	116	303
Mar 6-10	31	39	37	117	85	309
Mar 13-17	17	25	29	91	86	248

- New Year's Eve, 1956. We did it! 300 pizzas, by Ralph, Janet, Babs, Dan and Laura!
- September 5, 1970 - 260 pizzas by Ralph, Stephen, Janet, Anna and Babs.

Obviously the numbers increased as the years rolled on (left). These were accompanied by goofy, hand-drawn pictures and scribbled signatures. It was a testament to the teamwork and good will our father and grandparents strove to establish in spite of the heated pace in the kitchen. No matter how busy, they kept the working environment fun, supportive and fair. ~ Tom



## "Lena"

The following passage is a monologue from Lora Lee Ecobelli's stage-play "Kitchen Tales." In this speech, Lena, an eccentric Italian-American woman, explains why her spaghetti sauce is so important to her.

Never criticize an Italian woman's spaghetti sauce! The wrath of all humanity will come crashing down on your head and you'll never be trusted again. It's the ultimate mortal sin. People just don't understand the importance of what goes into a good sauce. It's not just tomatoes, garlic and olive oil, it's all our hopes and dreams and desires, simmering slowly on the stove. There's almost something erotic about making sauce. The tender way you brown the garlic in the olive oil, filling the house with seductive smells. Onions sautéing till they're just transparent enough, kinda like me. The lusty fragrance of basil and parsley, an aroma so intense it sends shivers through my whole body! And oh, yes, the spices! Each woman has her own distinct blend. I like lots of oregano and red hot pepper flakes; they cloud my head with a sizzling fever. And oh yes, I love the way my hands smell after chopping garlic. A earthy perfume that can linger on my fingertips for days ...

You know I feel totally honest and naked when I'm cooking sauce, but I also feel something even more primal than that. I feel the ghosts of all my ancestors whispering their deepest, most intimate secrets in my ears. So don't you dare tell me that my sauce is too spicy, or not sweet enough, or, even worse, not as good as your mother's! You will have opened a wound so deep and wide that you might never taste these delicacies again! Ask any Italian woman you know, and they'll all tell you the same thing.

We guard our legacies with a fierce Mediterranean fire that may seem irrational to some, but to us it's a fight to the death! We have to protect the integrity of all our little Italian grandmothers, whose blood and sweat are the real stock for this sauce! Women who had the magical powers to heal the sick with just a meatball on a fork! Okay, I admit, maybe I'm being a little bit neurotic, but I feel like you're insulting the very nature of my being when you question the validity of my spaghetti sauce. After all, it is my inheritance!



# Zuppa de Pesca

## INGREDIENTS

OLIVE OIL, extra virgin .....	1/3 cup
GARLIC, chopped coarse .....	4 cloves
WHITE WINE, dry .....	1 cup
CRUSHED RED PEPPER FLAKES (optional) .....	to taste
WATER .....	1 cup
SALT .....	1 tsp
CLAMS, Cherry stone or Littleneck, scrubbed .....	1 dozen
MUSSELS, scrubbed, beards removed .....	1 dozen
MARINARA SAUCE (see recipe on page 36) .....	6 cups
CRAB MEAT, lump .....	1/2 lb
(or any firm-fleshed fish, cut into 2-inch chunks)	
BAY SCALLOPS .....	1/2 lb
LOBSTER TAILS, split (optional) .....	2
SHRIMP, medium, peeled and deveined .....	1/2 lb
CALAMARI, cleaned, cut into rings .....	1/2 lb
PARSLEY, chopped coarse .....	1/4 cup



PREPARED BY  
Tom Ecobelli  
Los Angeles, CA

PHOTO BY  
Tom Ecobelli  
Los Angeles, CA

It is probably best to prepare all the ingredients, especially the seafood, before you begin cooking.

Heat the olive oil in a large stainless steel stock pot. Add the garlic, sautéing quickly, then add the wine, red pepper flakes, water and salt. When the liquid begins to boil, add the clams and mussels. Cover the pot until they just steam open. Remove the shellfish from the pot, strain the liquid and reserve to be used later.

In another large stock pot, heat the marinara sauce and cook to reduce slightly. Add the crab meat (or other firm-fleshed fish) and cook for 5 minutes. Add the lobster, shrimp, scallops and calamari, and cook for another few minutes until the lobster is done. (Look for it to be bright red; it doesn't take long.) Slowly add the clams, mussels and all of the reserved broth.

Cover the pot and reduce the heat to low and simmer. The soup will be thinner because of the clam/mussel broth. Taste and adjust salt and pepper to taste. Serve the soup in large bowls, with a crusty garlic bread.

*This fish stew is almost like a French bouillabaisse. It was always served on Christmas Eve after midnight mass. The idea is to have a different fish for every day of the week ("Seven Fishes for Christmas"), and in this case, all in one pot. Laurina would change the recipe according to whatever fish was available. She was famous for her special holiday fish dinners at the restaurant.*

*One of my first memories of our grandmother Laurina has to do with tiny, black periwinkle snails. I couldn't have been more than three years old. I remember walking into the kitchen all dressed up in my red and white Christmas pajamas, looking up and seeing her towering over me at the stove, opening the lid of a huge pot of boiling water. She lifted me up and put me on the counter so I could see what she was doing. She reached down into a brown paper bag and took out a fistful of black snails. I was fascinated. She laughed when she saw my eyes open wide, then she opened the lid of the pot and threw the snails in. As soon as they hit the water they decided it was not the place to be. They proceeded to crawl up and down the sides of the pot, across the counter and onto the floor. I never knew that snails could move that fast. Laurina was laughing as*

she scooped them up and threw them back into the giant pot of doom. Later on that night she tried to get me to taste one because they were considered a great delicacy. Our grandfather loved them so much he even had a little gold toothpick he kept in his wallet for extracting them but there was no way was I going to put one of those things in my three-year-old mouth. I was still thinking about those poor murdered snails! ~ Lora Lee

## *"Tramp" the Wonder Dog*



Tramp was an old mutt who showed up at the restaurant one day looking for a handout. He was pure white with one black ear and looked just like the dog in the "Our Gang" comedies. He was a vagabond spirit and would disappear for weeks at a time (hence the name "Tramp") but would always come back when he was tired of the road. My dad fed him meatballs and leftover steak bones so he lived high-on-the-hog when he was visiting. He was a really smart dog and learned quite a few tricks from all the adoring customers and employees. He was so lovable that he had total access to the busy kitchen and would lie down next to my father while he was cooking, ready to catch any scraps that might hit the floor.

Tramp really took a shine to me and was extremely protective of his five-year-old ward. He even saved my life one day. It was a particularly snowy winter and the plow trucks had cleared the parking lot and piled a huge mountain of snow up next to the garage. Dressed up like an Eskimo, I went out to play in the snow early in the morning. I was a very independent five-year-old and was

always going on solo adventures so my mother wasn't overly concerned, but when dinner time arrived and I had not returned, my panicked family organized a search team. The police were called and everyone scoured the neighborhood, but I was nowhere to be found. Tramp, however, kept running to the top of the snow bank and barking frantically for hours, but no one paid any attention.

Finally, as the stars were beginning to come out, my father climbed the 20-foot mound to get him down and there he found me. I had climbed up the mountain looking for a good place to put my sled but the snow was unstable and I had fallen deep into the bottom of the bank. No one had thought to look up there, but Tramp never left me. Because the snow served as insulation it kept me from freezing to death, but it also muffled my voice, so no one but Tramp could hear my calls for help. He had saved my life. That old pooch was pampered like there was no tomorrow after that, being touted a hero greater than Lassie. ~ Lora Lee



# "Babs" and the Ecobelli's Bar

GOURMET RINGSIDE



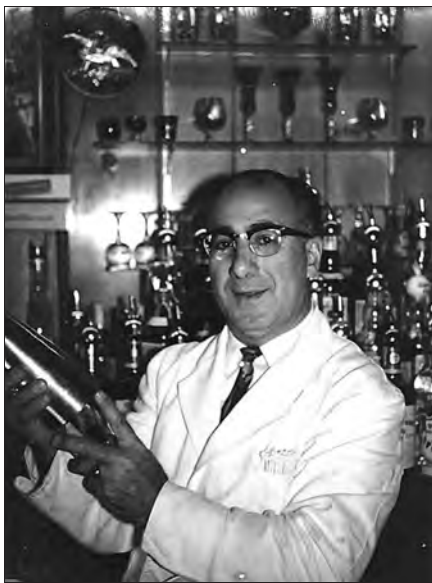
Ecobelli's Restaurant in Ballston Spa has always been proud to serve you the finest in Italian and American cuisine...and now...Ralph Ecobelli is proud to introduce you to the people who have made his restaurant so popular!...People like Dominick (Babs) Schiavo of Ballston Spa. "Babs" has been part of the Ecobelli family since 1955. He is a native of Ballston Spa and his hobbies are gardening and remodeling. His favorite drinks are The BOMB and GILHOEY — specials this week for only \$.65!! Why not come in this week and say "hello" to Babs. He will be happy to serve you his favorite drinks. Ecobelli's Restaurant, Route 50, Ballston Spa: Open Tuesday through Saturday.

Ecobelli's  
Tam O'Shanter

Route 50, Ballston Spa  
Open Tues-Sat.

WROW  
50 AM & PM STEREO 95

Be sure to listen each week for the Ecobelli's staff salute on



Dominick "Babs" Schiavo was the bartender in the restaurant's bar for decades, and many customers were as loyal to him as they were to the food. It was in the bar area that Laurina first started serving food.



In the old news clipping below, the writer claimed that Dan ran a tight ship in the bar. But, as is quite evident in some of the photos, things could get a little out of hand!



DAN AND LAURA ECOBELLI

When Dan and Laura purchased the Tam in 1947, it was a dream fulfilled. Little did they dream from their humble beginning nor did they realize that they would build a reputation in the restaurant business that is now known from coast to coast. When they first started they worked together in building their reputation. Dan would take care of the bar and also play the mandolin to entertain the customers. Laura would be in the kitchen making pizza and popcorn to give to whatever customers were in at the time. As business grew Laura would mingle with the patrons greeting them with a warm smile and make sure their evening at the Tam was enjoyable. Dan was known for his sternness, for he would not allow his employees or his customers to get out of hand. Now after 29 years, Dan has passed away but Laura still has a hand in the operation. We salute Dan and Laura this week by offering a glass of champagne to all customers coming in this week for dinner.



# Chicken Romano

## INGREDIENTS

SEASONED FLOUR .....	1/2 cup
(salt, black pepper, garlic powder)	
EGGS, beaten .....	2
PARSLEY, fresh, chopped fine .....	1 tsp
OLIVE OIL, light .....	6 tbsps
CHICKEN THIGH, boneless .....	1
CHICKEN BREAST, boneless .....	1
BUTTER .....	4 tbsps
GARLIC, chopped fine .....	2 cloves
SALT .....	1/2 tsp (to taste)
BLACK PEPPER, fresh ground, coarse .....	1/2 tsp (to taste)
ROSEMARY, dried .....	1 pinch
SAGE, dried ground .....	1 pinch
PROSCIUTTO HAM, chopped .....	1/2 cup
or any type HAM or HARD SALAMI	
WHITE WINE, dry .....	1/2 cup
PEAS, petite, frozen .....	1/2 cup



PREPARED BY  
Lora Lee Ecobelli  
Saugerties, NY

PHOTO BY  
Lora Lee Ecobelli  
Saugerties, NY

In a bowl, make the seasoned flour by mixing salt, pepper and garlic powder (to taste) with a 1/2 cup of flour. Whisk the eggs and parsley in another bowl. In a skillet, heat the olive oil to medium heat.

Dredge the chicken pieces in the seasoned flour, dip into the egg mixture, then back into the seasoned flour. Brown the coated chicken quickly in the oil, remove and set aside. In the same skillet on medium heat, add the butter, garlic, salt, pepper, rosemary and sage, sautéing quickly. Add the ham and white wine. Simmer for 5 minutes.

Return the chicken to the skillet. Spoon the sauce over the chicken and add the peas. Lower the heat and simmer 10 minutes more. Adjust the seasoning to taste. To serve, garnish with more fresh parsley.



...is proud to introduce to you this week's featured customers. Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Szablewski of Schenectady, customers for 28 years. The Szablewskis enjoy golf and bowling. Their favorite dish at Ecobelli's is veal scallopino a la Ecobelli.

SALESMEN  
"Drummers Table"

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**GOURMET RINGSIDE**



Ecobelli's Restaurant in Ballston Spa has always been proud to serve you the finest in Italian and American cuisine...and now...Ralph Ecobelli is proud to introduce you to the people who have made his restaurant so popular...people like Allen Walker of Burnt Hills, our Bus Boy since last June. His hobby is skiing and his favorite dish is deep fried scallops, a special this week for 50 cents off the regular price. Why not come in this week and say "hello" to Allen. He will be happy to serve you his favorite dish, Ecobelli's Restaurant, Route 50, Ballston Spa: Open Tuesday through Sunday.

Now Open Sundays 1-9 p.m.

Ecobelli's   
Tam O' Shanter

Route 50, Ballston Spa  
open Tues - Sun



Be sure to listen each week for the Ecobelli's staff salute on

# DESSERTS

AUNT ANNA'S CHRISTMAS COOKIES .....	0.80
LEMON ICE .....	0.81
PIGNOLI COOKIES .....	0.82
LEMON RICOTTA EASTER PIE .....	0.83
AMARETTO CHEESECAKE .....	0.84
E-WANDS .....	0.85

The Freddie Frehofer Show was a popular Schenectady-area children's television show in the '50's and '60's. It was sponsored by the Frehofer Baking company, which is famous in upstate New York for its delicious cakes and cookies. It was hosted by Freddie Frehofer himself (a giant rabbit) and the cartoonist Jim Fisk and his signature squiggle drawings. The show featured music and stories and, of course, lots of goodies. Many area children appeared on the TV show on their birthdays, including yours truly, and each kid was given their very own birthday cake. It was my first venture into the world of show biz singing the Freddie Frehofer song — but I got into trouble for sticking my fingers into my cake to taste it!

Ecobelli's was a huge supporter of our local businesses. Every Saturday morning the Frehofer truck would pull up to the restaurant and deliver boxes of Chocolate Chip and Black-Eyed Susan cookies. Laurina would buy boxes of them to give to the children of her employees and to her favorite customers. ~ Lora Lee (front row, second from left)



## Freddie Frehofer Song

Freddie, Frehofer we think you're  
swell.  
Freddie, we love the stories you tell.  
We love your cookies, your cakes and  
your pies,  
We love the way you roll those funny  
bunny eyes.  
Freddie, we're ready, we're waiting for  
you,  
Freddie, we love all the things that you  
do.  
We love your cookies your bread and  
your cakes.  
We love everything Freddie Frehofer  
bakes.

# Pignoli Cookies

## INGREDIENTS

PIGNOLI (pine nuts) .....	8 oz
ALMOND PASTE .....	8 oz
GRANULATED SUGAR .....	1/2 cup
POWDERED SUGAR .....	1/2 cup
FLOUR, all-purpose .....	1/4 cup
EGG WHITES, beaten lightly .....	2 med. eggs

(makes about 2 dozen cookies)

Preheat oven to 300°. Grease two baking sheets or line them with parchment paper. Place the pine nuts into a bowl.

In a food processor, break up the almond paste into small pieces. Add the two sugars and the flour and pulse together. Once the mixture is finely ground, begin to add the egg whites a little at a time, just until the dough comes together.

Using a spoon and wet hands, scoop a small spoonful of the dough, and place this into the bowl of pine nuts. Roll the dough around until it is lightly coated with the nuts, and place it on the prepared baking sheet. Continue forming the cookies in this manner, placing them 2 inches apart on the baking sheet.

Bake the cookies at 300° for 20-25 minutes, and allow them to cool. Dust them lightly with powdered sugar before serving.



PREPARED BY  
Lora Lee Ecobelli  
Saugerties, NY

PHOTO BY  
Lora Lee Ecobelli  
Saugerties, NY



No special occasion would be complete without these delicious cookies. They are always served at weddings, where they are mixed with Jordan almonds for good luck. Guests would wrap them in napkins to take home as a delicious remembrance of the day. ~ Lora Lee



# Word of Mouth

When we announced that we were creating this cookbook and asked for submissions from the public, we received an overwhelming response from friends and family. How nice it is to know that so many people have such great memories of the restaurant! ~ Lora Lee & Tom

*THERE WAS NO BETTER PIZZA anywhere back in the day. Friendly staff and great food — many restaurants today could learn a bunch from your family's joint. Wish it was still around ~ Brien Hollowood*

*THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES of "over the river" as we would call it when we were upstate. ~ Louis Fischetti*

*THIS WAS THE BEST! And we could walk there! And go to the back door and get our pizzas ... mmm ... pizza ... ~ Melissa Szeliga*

*I REMEMBER MY PARENTS going out there for anniversaries and our family buying great pizza there. And getting penny lollipops from there with Tommy and Sandy and Barbara. Great times! ~ Marie Brown*

*I REMEMBER GOING IN THE KITCHEN and coming out with delicious pizza! One time, when I was spending the night, I ate so much that my folks had to come get me early the next morning! It sure was good though. And let's not forget the eggplant parmesan. It was wonderful!*

*I remember being in the Tam's kitchen with my dad. Your grandma and him were having a big discussion about sauces. Spoons came out and the tasting began. I'm not sure if it was over spaghetti or pizza sauce. I do remember standing there thinking, "Hey! I wanna taste!" ~ Michelle D'Elisiis*

*AWESOME pizza!!!! ~ Mark Dempsey*

*I LOVED THAT PLACE, especially the veal and peppers! ~ Holly Anderson O'Hern*

*MEATBALLS, Babs, munchies! ~ Susan Stomski Doherty*

*I JUST WISH I COULD FIND Italian sausage as good as the stuff on Ecobelli's pizzas. Almost 50 years and I can still remember the taste! ~ Karen Sorenson Lakey*

*YEARS AGO WHEN MY PARENTS were visiting New York with Laurina, she gave my father Tony a gravy ladle and to this day, every time I use it, my mom (Marie) reminds me where it came from! ~ Laura Weber*

*THE TAM ... I loved going there. Thanks for the memories! ~ Joan D'Elisiis Hansen*

# About the Authors



## LORA LEE ECOBELLI

Lora Lee Ecobelli is an actress, writer, producer, director, singer-songwriter and teacher. Lora Lee's roles as an actress include Broadway and many Off-Broadway credits. She was the winner of the Harold Clurman Award for Best Leading Actress in an Off-Broadway Show for *The Vise*. Some of her favorite roles include: *A Christmas Carol*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Aurora Leigh*, *Fire Exit*, *The Trojan Women*, *Antigone*, *Hester Prynne at Death*, *Sea Island Nightmare*, *The Imaginary Cuckold*, *Lady of The Larkspur Lotion* and *The Little Oasis*. Her noted regional productions include *Blithe Spirit*, *On Golden Pond*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Seagull*, *Our Town*, *Lysistrata*, *Dancing at Lugnasa*, *A Street Car Named Desire*, *Spoon River Anthology* and *Talking With ...*

Lora Lee's film and television credits include a leading role in the soon-to-be-released independent, *The Abolitionists*, as well as featured roles in *Judy Berlin*, *Carla*, *Jimmy's Cafe*, *Dose*, ABC's *Elmopalooza*, Comedy Central's *Upright Citizens Brigade* and MTV's *The Mom Song*. She is a proud member of AEA, SAG, AFTRA.

As a playwright, her plays have been widely produced regionally and in New York City. Several are published by Art Age Publications and Smith & Kraus. Her full length play *The Little Oasis* is featured in two anthologies by Smith & Kraus, *Best Women Monologues of 1998* and *Best American Scenes of 1998*. Lora Lee has since adapted *The Little Oasis* as a screenplay.

As a screenwriter, the feature film *Chickadee* was originally conceived and created by Lora Lee as a stage play. It enjoyed several successful New York productions before Lora Lee and her brother Tom Ecobelli decided to collaborate and develop it into a screenplay. *Chickadee* is based on their grandmother Laura Inzinna Ecobelli's 1922 journal, which tells the passionate story of the landmark trial in which she brought her abusive stepfather to justice.

Lora Lee also recently completed her first fiction novel, *Wanda-Allen*, and of course, *Laurina's Kitchen*, a family cookbook which she co-authored with her brother Tom.

As a singer-songwriter, Lora Lee has four CD's to her credit. Her music is diverse and eclectic, ranging from country to folk to jazz. She has performed both solo and with her band across the country at festivals and concert halls.

Lora Lee and her late husband Leo Burmester, along with actress Peggity Price, founded The Blue Horse Repertory Company. Blue Horse Rep is an exciting collage of professional actors, writers and musicians dedicated to the development of new works, as well as the performance of classics. Lora Lee and Peggity share the directing and producing responsibilities for the theater's many productions. Based at Arts on the Lake in New York's Hudson Valley, the blossoming theatre company is now branching out with satellite productions across the region. The company offers professional training programs for actors, taught by Lora Lee, with workshops for adults, children and people with special needs.

# About the Authors



## **TOM ECOBELLI**

Tom Ecobelli is an actor, writer and producer now based in the Los Angeles area. As an actor, Tom attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York and has performed in regional theatre, independent films, improvisational comedy, television sitcoms and national commercials. His notable credits as a guest star include the CBS sitcom, *Still Standing*, and Disney's *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody*.

Tom and his co-writer Heather George are producing *Animal Lovers Only*, an animal-driven feature that gives a behind-the-scenes look at emergency veterinary care, animal rescue organizations and animal shelters. Every animal "actor" used in the film will be taken from an animal shelter's death row and later adopted out to a loving home.

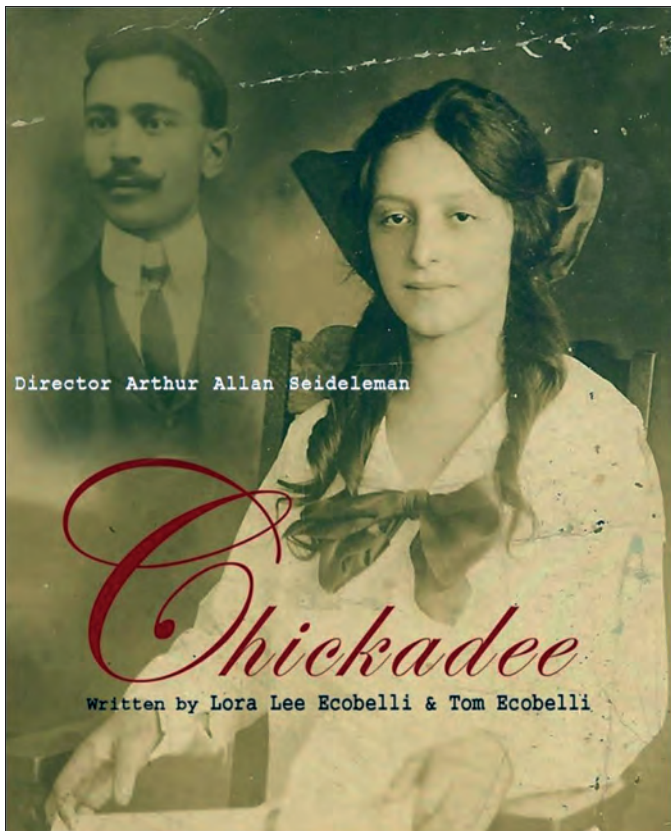
He and his co-writer Peter Marino's full-length comedy, *The Grandma Show*, has been produced numerous times in New York, Los Angeles and regionally. Tom and Peter have adapted it into a feature comedy screenplay as well. Tom's other play, *The Mouse*, written with Susan Touchbourne, was a finalist in the Edward Albee Theatre Conference in Valdez, Alaska. Another of their plays, *Slow Critters - Fast Food*, was produced in Los Angeles at First Stage Hollywood.

As a screenwriter, Tom has collaborated with his sister Lora Lee Ecobelli to develop her stage play into a screenplay, *Chickadee*. The script is based on the memoir of their grandmother, Laura Inzinna Ecobelli, written in 1922, which tells the passionate story of the landmark trial in which she brought her abusive stepfather to justice. He further collaborated with Lora Lee as co-author of *Laurina's Kitchen*.

Melissa Leo, Danny Glover and Paige Howard will star in Tom's feature drama, *Prairie Bones*, co-written with Susan Touchbourne, and directed by Connie Stevens. Tom is producing with Susan Touchbourne, Carolyn Long, and Concetta Di Matteo through their production company, IsWas (It Starts With a Story Productions).

# *Chickadee: the Movie*

*Laurina's Kitchen is a companion project meant to compliment Chickadee, our feature film based on a journal Laurina wrote as a young woman in 1922. Long before Ecobelli's was a reality, Laurina found herself at the center of a landmark child abuse trial. Although it was painful, she knew it was important to record what happened to her. Very few people knew what she endured as a child. When we were old enough she shared the journal with us. She expressed her desire to have her story told so that she could help other children overcome similar adversity and lead happy, healthy lives, free of the stigma and shame such tragedies can bring. Chickadee is our tribute to her and our attempt to help her dream come true. ~ Lora Lee & Tom*



In a time when children's voices were silenced, Laurina, a courageous 13-year-old Italian girl, sparks a landmark, controversial trial when she accuses her stepfather of a shocking crime.

Two young Italian-American sisters, Laurina and Minnie, wait behind the gates of a Catholic orphanage for their immigrant mother Carmella. After their father died, Carmella was forced to leave them at the orphanage for years. Now remarried to Pietro, Carmella is finally able to bring her daughters home. Pietro charms everyone and the family looks forward to a new start.

With the help of his friend Vittorio, Pietro transplants the family to a farm in upstate New York, but their hopes for a new life are shattered when they're faced with the hardships of rural life and racial discrimination. Pietro rapidly declines. He forces Carmella and the girls to work long, grueling hours in a textile

mill. What little money they do earn, he wastes on gambling and drinking. His condition worsens after he receives bad news from his father in Italy.

Laurina blossoms into a lovely young woman and slowly becomes the object of Pietro's obsession. At a mill-workers dance, Laurina shares her first innocent kiss with her date, Alberto. When the jealous Pietro finds out, he batters and sexually abuses her. Over the next several months he intimidates her into silence.

When Laurina becomes pregnant at 13, the truth can no longer be hidden. She makes the courageous decision to have Pietro arrested.

Laurina's strength and the ensuing influential, landmark trial unite the town and her family, lending inspiration to generations of silent victims.

For more information, visit the official movie web site at  
[www.ChickadeeTheMovie.com](http://www.ChickadeeTheMovie.com)