

Belmont Business Improvement District Fall 2019 Newsletter



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Ferragosto 2019

On Sunday, September 8th, the Belmont BID hosted our annual Ferragosto festival. Visitors from the tri-state area and beyond traveled to the neighborhood to be part of the 20+ years celebration that includes Italian culture, live entertainment, and of course the most delicious Italian food! This year the 48th Precinct estimated a record breaking 30,000 attendees! Festival-goers, merchants, street performers, and entertainers converged at world-famous Arthur Avenue and East 187th Street, on the beautiful day, to celebrate the 2,000 year old



ancient Italian tradition that is rooted in the early days of the Roman Empire, and celebrates the harvest season. Ferragosto included musical performances by Elio Scaccio, Natalie Pinto, Ragdoll, RockSteady, and Bob Bisaccia. There was also comedic theatre performed by Commedia Dell'Arte. Guests were invited to indulge in everything from pizza and pasta to pork and pastries. In between sampling Italian fare and shopping for local goods, attendees admired luxurious cars from Alfa Romeo and Maserati, and perused cultural booths from local institutions including the Bronx Zoo. Ferragosto was generously sponsored by the Little Italy in the Bronx Sauce brand, Maserati & Alfa Romeo of White Plains, Con Edison, SBH Health System, and the Bronx Zoo. The festival was a delight for all, highlighting the old-world charm, fun family atmosphere, and classic Italian taste of our authentic neighborhood. We are already looking forward to inviting everyone back for Ferragosto 2020 on September 13th!

New York Pizza Festival

The Belmont BID was excited to host the second annual New York Pizza Festival on October 5th & 6th. The event brought 29 pizzaioli from across the United States and from Naples to our community to showcase their special talents. An estimated crowd of 20,000 to 25,000 was in attendance over the two days! The event is a great way to attract new customers, and solidify the neighborhood as a food and Italian cultural destination. For both event days, the Belmont BID hired staff to survey attendees. Of the nearly 1,500 responders, 92% came here specifically for New York Pizza Festival. Most impressive, 34% of responders had



never been to the neighborhood before, and 96% of all respondents indicated they would certainly return to eat and/or shop. This means New York Pizza Festival easily brought at least 6,800 potential new customers to the neighborhood, and nearly 20,000 will be returning! 21% of visitors came from the Bronx, 20% from Manhattan, and 16% from Westchester. As our global presence as an authentic Little Italy continues to grow, we had attendees from as far away as Italy, Switzerland, and Finland. Attendees came to savor world class pizza, but also to explore and shop in our unique, century old community. Mayor de Blasio stopped by and told the crowd that “some of the best pizza makers from across the globe are here today.”

New for this year, the event had famous street artists painting on canvas in the Belmont Plaza. The DJ booth was also set up there, and that is where celebrity DJ Skeery Jones, from Z100, interacted with the crowds. The neighborhood also received a substantial amount of publicity surrounding the event, with articles in numerous publications like Thrillist, and the Daily News, and features on NBC, FOX, and others.



Italian-American Heritage Celebration

The Belmont BID was proud to partner with Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. as he hosted his annual Official Bronx Celebration of Italian-American Heritage & Culture Month or “Mese della Cultura Italiana.” The event took place on Thursday, October 3rd at the Schiff Family Great Hall on the grounds of the Bronx Zoo. Attendees were treated to delectable Italian food and desserts, and entertainment by Italian-American singer Natalie Pinto. The 2019 Honorees were Sal Natale, Proprietor of Pugsley Pizza, Carlos A. Scissura, Esq., President & CEO of NYC Building Congress, and Jill Nicolini, WPIX 11, Reporter.

Columbus Day Festivities on Arthur Ave

This Columbus Day, October 14th, the Belmont BID marked the occasion with live entertainment by RockSteady. They performed a blend of doo-wop, rock, pop, and disco, originally by Italian singers and/or songwriters. Neighborhood visitors weren’t be able to resist the urge to dance between their shopping trips and lunch on the Avenue. Tables and chairs were set up from 12-3pm on East 186th St for the sunny day. Attendees were able to sit back, relax, and enjoy as they took a break from the hustle and bustle of the neighborhood. There was coloring and games for kids and young adults as well.

Columbus Day Festivities!
 Monday, October 14th, 2019
 East 186th Street at Arthur Avenue / 12-3pm
Featuring a live musical performance by RockSteady & coloring and games for kids!

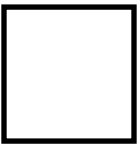
Spend the day on Arthur Ave!
 Explore our deliciously authentic neighborhood, and enjoy an electrifying performance between your shopping stops.
 For more information:
www.BronxLittleItaly.com / (718)BX-ITALY
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Little Italy in the Bronx Brand

We’re thrilled to share that our Little Italy in the Bronx brand continues to grow. The six flavors of jarred sauce can now be found in 6,000 stores across the United States and Canada. Our last quarterly contribution from Zidian Group was nearly \$12,000 bringing the grand total to nearly \$60,500 since launching in March of 2018. This revenue source helps the BID expand on the supplemental services offered to our members like marketing, sanitation, and security. We’re excited to share that the product line will be expanding to include Tuscan wheat pasta, including spaghetti, angel hair, linguine, rigatoni, rotini, and farfalle, and gnocchi! These pastas and gnocchi are scheduled to be available in stores nationwide in early 2020.



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Nicholas & Lence Communications

Since their work began in April, Nicholas & Lence Communications (NLC) has worked diligently with the BID on pitching a variety of neighborhood story angles to the press. Links to all the articles the neighborhood has been featured in can be found on our website, by clicking “In The News” under the “Home” tab. Most recently, it has been the new cannoli bar at Artuso Pastry Shop, and pasta recipes from the neighborhood for National Pasta Month. This summer NLC and the BID hosted two familiarization tours that took members of the press to various stores for a behind the scenes look into the neighborhood. The tours resulted in a tremendous amount of neighborhood coverage in print, online, and social media channels. We also welcomed ACF Fiorentina to Arthur Ave with a pep rally ahead of their USA International Champions Cup. During the fall we will be working with NLC on attracting visitors for the various holiday activities in the neighborhood, announcing the Little Italy in the Bronx pastas, holiday cooking tips, a possible Arthur Avenue Restaurant Week in Q1 of 2020, and as always, new happenings in the district.



Tree Lighting Ceremony

The Belmont BID is excited to once again host our annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. On the advice of NLC, we have moved the event up this year to Saturday, November 30th, which coincides with Small Business Saturday. We have once again partnered with Love Holds Life, and will be giving away toys to kids. As always, the event will feature Santa, carolers, Italian cookies, and hot chocolate. We are also working on ways to partner with the Bronx Zoo for the event. After a hiatus, the Bronx Zoo will be welcoming back their holiday light program, so it's truly a great time to combine our institutions.