



BUCK ENNIS

core, but we've added new things." In 1985 Sahadi's began selling prepared foods, looking to share classic family recipes while adjusting to the public's evolving tastes. The new Industry City location has tables as well as beer and wine. The key is to keep pace with the changing ways people buy and consume food. "There's tons and tons of ways to go grocery shopping nowadays," Sahadi said. "People do it on their phones even. You want to give them a reason to come to the store."



COURTESY OF RUSS & DAUGHTERS

Keep it in the family

The Russ & Daughters "appetizing store" has survived on Houston Street for 106 years. Current proprietor Niki Russ Federman, the fourth-generation co-owner, notes that the store and its bagels, bialys and pickled and smoked fish link her and her customers to their Jewish immigrant roots. "Food is so tied up in memory and identity," Federman noted.

She owns and operates the original fish shop and Russ & Daughters Café on the Lower East Side, the food concessions at the Jewish Museum and the Brooklyn outpost, where her cousin Josh Russ Tupper runs the bakery and nationwide shipping hub. They entered the family business by choice, not force.

"We like to joke that the secret to a successful family business is to have as few family members involved as possible," Federman said. "For each generation, there should be someone who wants to do the work but doesn't feel obligated to do it."

Evolve your business

In 1918, faced with anti-Italian prejudice, Sicilian immigrant Sam Bellitto changed his name to Sam Bellitte, figuring it sounded more French, and opened a bicycle, motorcycle and radio repair shop. He made 65 cents the first day. One hundred and two years later, Bellitte Bicycles continues to operate out of the same Jamaica, Queens, building where it is managed by Sam's



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grandson, Sal Bellitte. He says the family-owned shop has needed to evolve multiple times over the years to compete in changing economic conditions and has recently moved away from new bicycle sales into service and repairs.

"In recent years the trend in the bicycle industry has changed," Bellitte said. "So we have evolved, which we've done many times over 100 years."

The services the shop offers for bicycles include anything from simple installation of tires and tubes to full tune-ups, fixing hydraulic braking systems and rerouting chains into traditional cables.

Bellitte estimates the store sees as many as 100 customers each day during the busy summer months—many of them loyal faces from the neighborhood.

"The store is generally packed," he said. "A lot of that has to do with our reputation. We have a ton of repeat customers, and we take great pride in that."



COURTESY OF TEITEL BROTHERS

Pass it on

At 2372 Arthur Ave. in the Bronx, customers spill out of the Teitel Brothers Wholesale Grocery Store, having bought food products imported from Italy, such as fresh pasta and Parmesan, canned tomatoes and olive oil. It's not much different than it was in 1915, the year a pair of immigrant brothers from Austria—Jacob and Morris Teitel—opened their namesake market.

"We buy from Italy, we buy direct, we have our own brands, and we have the best prices of most stores in New York," said Gilbert Teitel, the store's current owner and son of Jacob. "And then there's the service. We bend over backward to satisfy our customers. That's the secret: Give 'em quality and give 'em lower prices than anywhere else."

The Teitel Brothers store sells three brands of its own olive oil as well as its own brands of San Marzano tomatoes and numerous Italian delicacies, which have remained a store specialty over the years.

Jacob and Morris Teitel originally hired Italians from the neighborhood to assist with their market and ended up speaking Italian before they spoke English. Their family lived above the store after it opened: five people sharing three rooms. After the first generation passed on, Gilbert joined his older brother in running the store in 1959.

"Same building, same place, same station, same time, same everything," Gilbert Teitel said. "Nothing has changed except the generations." ■

Businesses that have stood the test of time

Sage advice from the city's century-old operations

BY BRIAN PASCUS AND WILL BREDDERMAN

New York can be a harsh environment for small businesses. Taxes, rent increases, fines and minimum-wage increases can spell doom for the hardest operations.

In this rule-of-the-jungle atmosphere, there are still some mom-and-pop shops that have found not only a way to weather the city's fickle consumer trends but also to endure through the ages.

Last week the city Department of Small Business Services honored a handful of 100-year-old establishments across the five boroughs, celebrating the longevity of these stores, shops and attractions that have proved to be permanent neighborhood fixtures since opening between 1878 and 1920. The companies include Italian destinations Teitel Brothers and Mario's Restaurant in the Bronx; Bellitte Bicycles, Eneslow Shoes and Orthotics, and boiler manufacturer Sussman-Automatic of Queens; and Supreme Chocolatier of Staten Island.

"It's difficult. A lot of businesses do not make it past five years," Gregg Bishop, commissioner of the city Department of Small Business Services, said in a Feb. 27 speech. Here are some words of wisdom from some of the shops that hit the century mark.

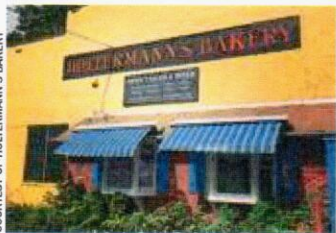
Offer something unique

The titular ride at Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park is set to celebrate its centennial on Memorial Day along with an expanded amusement area and a book commemorating the Coney Island landmark's history. History is core to the operating philosophy of co-owner Dennis Vourderis, whose father took ownership of the attraction in 1983.

"One way to phrase it, and it's one of our slogans through the years: They don't build them like this anymore," Vourderis told *Crain's*.

The Wonder Wheel, with its shifting gondolas, is almost unique. The only other Ferris wheel with moving cars is at Disney's California Adventure, which is based on the patented Brooklyn model.

"The Wonder Wheel was the original," Vourderis said.



COURTESY OF HOLTERMANN'S BAKERY

Cherish your customers

As with other honorees, Jill Holtermann of Holtermann's Bakery on Staten Island said that her family's 142-year-old business regularly serves customers who came into the store as children. Many have warm memories associated with their bread and cakes, and are eager to share them.

"There are so many people who are loyal customers still who come in to look for that product that they remember growing up," Holtermann said. "I greet everybody when they come in, and I know them by name and by what they buy."

Many of the bakery's customers seek the same classic confections Holtermann's forebears used to home-deliver via horse and buggy. But the business isn't hesitant to try new things.

"Somebody will come in and say, 'This is what I feel like having today' and, OK, we'll try to do that," she said. "A lot of places aren't willing to do that these days."



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Adapt to survive

Sahadi's traces its roots to 1895, when the family grocery furnished ingredients to the Syrian and Lebanese community in Downtown Brooklyn. That community has largely relocated, but Sahadi's hasn't. In fact, it has grown. The grocery absorbed another Atlantic Avenue storefront in 2012, and last year it opened an outpost in chic Industry City.

"It meant going from a small store with ethnic ingredients, mainly catering to the Middle Eastern folk who were here, to international specialties," Ron Sahadi said. "We haven't gotten away from our