

TRIBUNE SELECTS BEST COMMERCIAL PASTA SAUCE COMPETITION AND TASTING HELD



The Italian Tribune's food editorial staff visited Kings Super Markets to prepare for our first annual Pasta Sauce Tasting. We selected some of America's most popular brands – Ragu, Prego, Paesana, Victoria, Emeril's, Newman's Own, and restaurant sauces by Rao's, Nanina's, and Patsy's, which are sold nationwide.

Our nine-judge panel was carefully selected from Italian food industry leaders and those with a superior knowledge of the culinary arts. The judges were: Larry Saia, "King of Cheese," President of Gourmet Italia Imports in Fort Lee, New Jersey; Gary Giordano, President of Galaxy Recycling and Carting in Jersey City; Ugo Autino of CLC Foods in East Rutherford; Joan Alagna, Managing Editor of the Italian Tribune; wine distributor Pietro Cavallo; Dr. Michael Scurti of Verona Dental Arts; Dean Paolucci, computer software consultant and food critic; and Augusto Sorriso, representative of the American people to the Italian government.

The panel sampled each sauce and voted on specific criteria by rating the sauces on a scale of 1 to 5. The sauces were judged according to taste, color, aroma, acidity, texture, and general quality, first served with Italian bread for dipping so that the judges could taste the sauces' genuine, unnumbered flavors. The sauces were also tasted with pasta – which was generously donated by our friends at Queen Ann Ravioli in Brooklyn – and calamari. After the tasting, our panel of prestigious Italian cuisine connoisseurs sipped Valdo Prosecco and discussed their own Italian cooking secrets.

And the winner is... Nanina's in the Park Gourmet Sauces.

After careful consideration, the judges panel selected the fresh and authentic sauces created by the culinary staff at Nanina's in the Park, a banquet facility located in Belleville, New Jersey.

The panel made the following comments about Nanina's winning marinara and vodka sauces. Dean Paolucci said the sauce had "great color," while Ugo Autino was impressed with Nanina's "good texture." Native Italian Augusto Sorriso commented on the sauce's "excellent balance" and mentioned that it was "not full of oregano," like some of the other sauces. Larry Saia complimented Nanina's for their sauce's "nice pulpiness and basilico flavor."

A first place crystal medallion is now being inscribed for Nanina's, along with medals for the culinary staff who created and prepared the original concept for the jarred sauces. The awards will be presented by Italian Tribune Publisher A.J. Buddy Fortunato at a congratulatory celebration, to be held next month. The owners of Nanina's in the Park, Vito Cucci and the Maurillo brothers, were thrilled upon winning the contest. When notified of their victory, Vito Cucci said, "It is such an honor to have been chosen as the best of the country's leading pasta sauces. At Nanina's, we strive to make our pasta sauces as genuine as possible, with adherence to Italian culinary traditions and practices, and we are proud that our efforts have in fact created a quality product."

Rao's Premium Pasta Sauces ranked a distant second to Nanina's. Most of our judges thought that the losing competitors tasted like pizza sauces. Ragu, Prego and celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse's sauces all ranked very low. Victoria earned the title of the worst, with high acidity, a terrible aroma, and a watery base.



The Panel of Judges



Larry Saia



Gary Giordano



Ugo Autino



Joan Alagna



Pietro Cavallo



Dr. Michael Scurti



Dean Paolucci



Augusto Sorriso