

A Little Slice of Italy

by Jackie Devine



Seeing me walk through the door at Tutto Bene's last Friday evening, Suzanne Thompson, our Yard Of the Month columnist, motioned me over to her table asking, "Are you doing a story on Chef Tony?" She and her husband, Donnie, were sitting at the bar enjoying appetizers and Happy Hour music.

Nodding, I started to speak, but she jumped right in, "I'm so glad. This place is Fairfield's hidden jewel. It's an outstanding Italian restaurant. Their lunches are not only wonderful; they are very affordable. Our Fairfield Women's Club has even met here. Donnie and I love their happy hour of wine and Tapas. Also, the live music and singing are fabulous." After that great review, I wondered if there was any more to be said.

On my way back to the banquet room to examine Chef Tony's extensive wine collection, I stopped at the table of two formally dressed students and asked the occasion. Ryan, handsomely attired in a spiffy black tux said, "We are on our way to our prom, but first we decided to come here for dinner." "Was it worth the trip," I asked. Giving me a big smile, Rachel, absolutely glowing in her beautiful red gown, beamed and said, "Yes, this is a very special place and the food is delicious."

Moving on, I pondered my love of anything Italian, especially



their craftsmanship. Italians make fabulous cars, elegant clothing, quality shoes, fine wine and excellent pasta. In my opinion, if you've had the good fortune to visit Italy, you know there's nothing like the experience. Well, maybe

that was the case in the past. But, lucky for us, we have Chef Tony and, Chef Tony has given us Tutto Bene—a little slice of Northern Italy right here in Fairfield.

If you are a connoisseur of Italian food, you already have several preconceived expectations: impeccable, friendly service; high-quality food obtained from the finest suppliers; and creative-yet-classic preparation. To top it off, you want your experience to leave you feeling happy knowing that you just ate a world-class meal. That is what you'll get at Tutto Bene's where Chef Tony says, "Everything is good!"

Chef Tony's passion for serving good food isn't all that sets him apart; it is the way he thinks about food that gives him the edge. As early as 16, he knew he wanted a career in the culinary arts. Fortunately, while living in Milan, he located a Tuscan family who recognized his talent and were also willing to invest time and effort to expand his culinary expertise, and teach him the preparation techniques of Northern Italian cuisine including the intricacies of fine dining. Ultimately, they taught him how to cook everything from A to Z. Primo-the pasta dishes, to secondo-the chicken, beef, and fish dishes.

Armed with that knowledge and ready to tackle the world, he immigrated to New York in 1980 with several non-culinary strikes against him. First, he didn't speak English; second, he didn't have a support group waiting in the wings to make his acclimatization to America easy.

However, he must have had that certain something, because he landed a job at Fiorella's, a New York institution, on 65th and 3rd Street. There, he was responsible for manning the kitchen, which

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Do you have an idea or suggestion for the newsletter? Want to submit a photo, article, or both? It's easy!! Email your articles to cypresspark@peelinc.com by the 10th of the preceding month. So if you get your ideas in before the deadline, you should see them in the very next month's newsletter.

We are glad to hear all of the positive feedback and we intend to continue to improving the look and feel of the newsletter according to what you tell us. So get as involved as you like! We look forward to hearing from you.

BECOMING A NEW MOM AGAIN, 19 YEARS LATER

Care from maternal-fetal medicine physician helps ensure the delivery of a healthy baby for one Cypress area woman

As a mother of three girls, Noor Alam knew a thing or two about pregnancy. But when she and her husband found out she was pregnant at age 44 with their fourth child, 19 years after the birth of their first, she knew things would be a little different this time around.

"I think our biggest concern was having a healthy baby, especially considering my age. We had some genetic testing done and when it came back normal, I think we both breathed a sigh of relief," remembers Alam.

Due to several factors, including high blood pressure, diabetes and advanced maternal age, Alam's OB-GYN referred her for co-management with a maternal-fetal medicine (MFM) physician. MFM physicians have special training for high-risk pregnancies as well as fetal ultrasound and prenatal diagnostic testing and counseling.

"While a MFM physician may assume the full care of a high-risk pregnant patient, more often than not, we provide consultations or

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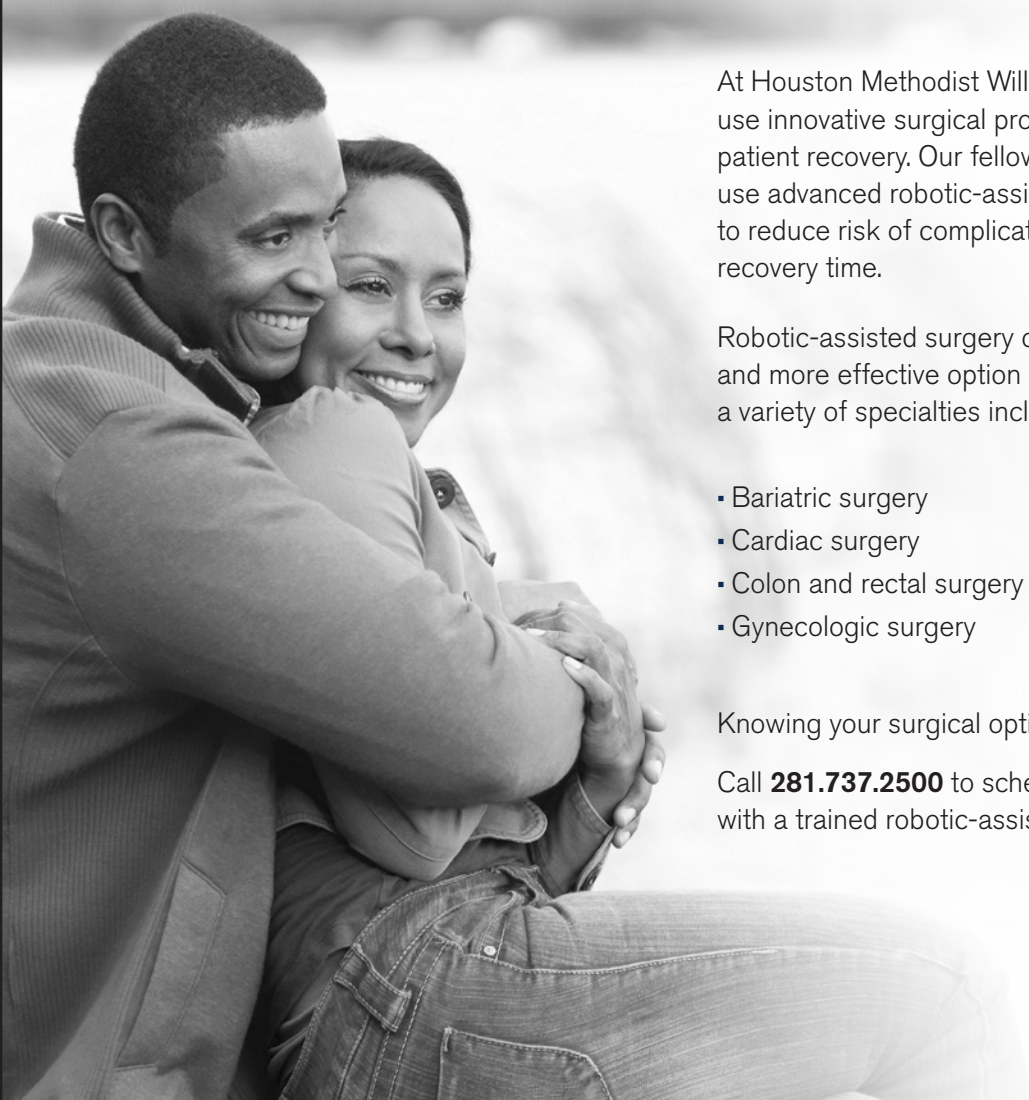


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CYPRESS PULSE

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co-management of patients in conjunction with the care provided by their OB-GYN,” says Ndaya Muleba, M.D., a maternal-fetal medicine physician with McGovern Medical School at UTHealth who is affiliated with Memorial Hermann Cypress Hospital.

Alam would be monitored by both Dr. Muleba and her OB-GYN throughout the course of her pregnancy. She says knowing she had two physicians gave her peace of mind.

“Towards the end of my pregnancy, I experienced a few difficulties. It was nice to know both physicians were following my case and monitoring my medications as well as the wellbeing of both myself and my child. When I would go in for an appointment, they had already spoken and had a plan in place for any changes in care that I might need,” Alam says.

Alam says she was grateful to have a team of people closely watching her progress because she ended up needing an emergency cesarean section to deliver her son, Ibrahim, on Valentine’s Day at Memorial Hermann Cypress.

“I can definitely say it was the most unique Valentine’s Day my husband and I have ever had!” Alam says.

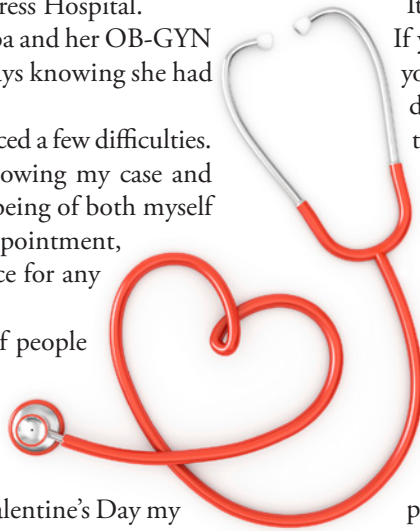
Dr. Muleba says it’s important for women with medical conditions affecting their pregnancy to initiate prenatal care

as early as possible to optimize the treatment of any high-risk conditions that might be present and receive a consultation from a MFM physician as early as possible.

“It’s important for women to take charge of their health. If you have a chronic health condition that may affect your pregnancy such as diabetes, obesity, prior pre-term delivery, or you are over the age of 35, you should talk with your primary care provider about having a consultation with a MFM physician to address these issues,” says Dr. Muleba. “Seeking prenatal care early to address complications of pregnancy can help improve outcomes for both mother and baby.”

The Birthing Center at Memorial Hermann Cypress Hospital offers a High-Risk Pregnancy Clinic in partnership with McGovern Medical School at UT Health. Women can receive a wide range of prenatal diagnostic testing, such as amniocentesis and DNA and enzyme analysis, preconception and genetic counseling, as well as specialized fetal care. A physician referral is required.

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(Continued from Cover)

was anchored in the middle of the restaurant, serving six dining areas and supporting 65 employees. By 1984 Special Food Market Magazine hailed him the best Pasta Chef in New York.

From there Chef Tony moved on to Quartino's, located at 58th between 2nd and 3rd, an excellent dining restaurant that served quality food freshly prepared on premises. It was there that Chef Tony became even more in touch with the differences in Italian cuisine and the distinctions between the north and the south—each region carrying unique traditions in cooking. But, at heart, Chef Tony dreamed of opening his own restaurant. His first venture was Dia Laganti and after that Via Torino in Queens.

In the early '90s, he relocated to Houston and opened Butchenella's in the Champions area that he operated for ten years. After his lease expired, he opened Via Torino, a piano bar and restaurant, close to Stubner and 1960, then Tonino's at Jones and Grant.

One day, a customer said, "You need to be running a restaurant in Fairfield." He answered, "Where is Fairfield?"

So his customer took him on a trip to acquaint him with the Fairfield area. Chef Tony realized his customer was right. The people in Fairfield were probably very interested in quality and convenience. He knew that he could provide that. And the rest is history.

Today, whether you are seeking a place for a quiet business meeting, a casual and impromptu dinner, or a formal gathering; Chef Tony has you covered. He has set the standard for fine Italian

dining in northwest Houston. You can dine at an artistically lighted marble bar, an intimate table or reserve the banquet room for your next private event. And, you'll never run out of wine. In reserve, Chef Tony stores over 8,500 wines from 34 countries. For those who prefer liquor, he serves that as well.

Chef Tony's menu includes scrumptious appetizers, homemade soups, fresh salads, simple hand-made pasta (even gluten-free for those with sensitive diets), Tuscan bread and authentic sauces flavored with fresh herbs, garlic, and virgin olive oil. You'll find a tasty variety of salami, cheeses and select meats including free-range chicken, milk-fed veal, and Angus beef. If you are a seafood lover, you'll be delighted by his grilled snapper, salmon, sea bass, halibut, tuna and lobster, all depending on season and availability.

If it is just pizza you're after, you'll love his hand thrown, wood-fired, brick oven baked, thin-crust margarita pizza, smothered in Mozzarella cheese and prepared with extra-virgin olive oil, fresh herbs, and spices. You can also add vegetables as well as meats and sausages.

Happy hour runs from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. On Friday and Saturday nights enjoy live music from 6:30 to 10:00. Tutto Bene's is the perfect place to catch a meal after church, for a post-theater dinner, or for a light bite and cocktails and dessert.

Just stepping in the door of Tutto Bene's transports you back to old Italy and envelops you in warm Italian hospitality where you will enjoy a never-ending supply of main courses, appetizers, and desserts guaranteed to tantalize your taste buds.

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WHAT'S LIVING IN MY CHIMNEY?

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center



If you're hearing twittering followed by rapid, high-pitched chirps in your fireplace, you've got Chimney Swifts but before you call an exterminator to have them removed, it's important to know that the birds have the

law on their side. They are protected by federal law under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It is illegal to remove or disturb their nests, eggs or young during the breeding season. Any knowledgeable, respected exterminating company won't touch them. Once the babies are old enough to chirp, they'll only be around for a couple of weeks before they leave the nest so hang in there and leave them alone. They cause little to no damage.

Sadly, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Chimney Swift populations have decreased by 72% since 1966. Their favorite nesting places are old hollow trees and masonry chimneys. With urban sprawl many of the trees are being removed and newer homes and buildings are being constructed without fireplaces. If fireplaces are being built, newer materials such as metal liners are being used making it impossible for the Swifts to cling to the sides.

Once a nesting site has been found, Mom and Dad Swift construct a half saucer-shaped nest made of twigs. The twigs are held together by glue-like saliva from a gland under the bird's tongue. The nest is "glued" to the side of the chimney.

Chimney Swifts fly almost constantly except when roosting overnight and nesting. They even bathe while flying. They fly down to the water, hit the surface with their body, bounce up and shake off the water. When it is time to rest, they don't sit on perches. They have long claws that cling to textured walls and other textured vertical surfaces such as the walls of your chimney.

Swifts are very beneficial. They gobble up thousands of mosquitoes, flies and other insects while in flight. Two parents along with their nestlings will consume up to 12,000 flying insects every day.

Come fall the birds migrate back to the Amazon River Basin.

Chimney Swifts are admitted to TWRC Wildlife Center every year. As part of our mission, we want to educate the public to the laws regarding this species as well as many other migratory species. If you have Chimney Swifts in your chimney, please leave them alone and don't risk the fines and possible jail time associated with disturbing them. If you have questions, please give us a call at 713-468-8972 or check our website at www.twrcwildlifecenter.org.

Cy-Fair Helping Hands Names New Co-Executive Directors

The Board of Directors welcomes Jean Dreyer and Patricia Hudson as Co-Executive Directors of Cy-Fair Helping Hands, a community ministry offering hope to the homeless and hungry of Cy Fair. Dreyer, who will serve as Executive Director, Homeless Initiatives, and Hudson, who will serve as Executive Director, Community Outreach, were selected to replace Executive Director Gwen Franke, who served from 2013 to April of 2018. Board member and volunteer, Tracy Martin, describes the new directors as "...two amazing ladies. They are very giving and passionate about serving and reaching out to the community." Jean and Patricia were formally introduced to volunteers, donors, business leaders and the community at the Spring Open House, Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at the Cy-Fair Helping Hands office.

Jean's corporate years were spent with the largest computing services company in Houston where she retired as Vice-President, Director of Operations. After her retirement, Jean and her husband purchased a floundering antique business which Jean managed and developed into a profitable, thriving business. Jean is a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and is a member of The Foundry United Methodist Church.

For many years Jean, working beside her husband, did street outreach to the homeless in the Northwest Houston area. They began ministering to the homeless from their truck, storing food, clothes and other needs of the homeless in their garage. It did not take long for John and Jean to realize they needed to provide much more than these items for the homeless. In 2010 they sold their antique business to fund Cy-Fair Helping Hands, a 501(c)(3) organization founded to help the homeless become self-sufficient. Under Jean's guidance, the fledgling organization grew and soon included office space and a food pantry which enabled CFHH to serve not only the homeless, but the hungry of Cy-Fair. "I am very excited to be back with Cy-Fair Helping Hands and working with the most enthusiastic, passionate person that I know, Pat Hudson."

Pat's calling to serve led her to a 28 year-long career as a special education and English as a Second Language teacher, coach, and mentor at HISD's Scarborough High School. Recognized for excellence in the classroom and dedication to her students, she received multiple honors, including the HISD Teacher of the Year, Tom Landry Special Olympics Coach of the Year, and the Crystal Award for Outstanding Teachers. After retiring in 2010, Pat volunteered for four years at Cypress Ranch High School, serving as a member of the Mustang Band Board of Directors, Team Mom for the Mustang Baseball team, photographer, and campus volunteer. Pat and her son, Sean Christopher, were awarded The Presidential Service Award from President Barack Obama through the Cypress Ranch Key Club.

When Sean went off to college in 2014, Hudson promptly replaced him with a yorkie poo, and set about finding a new focus in her life. She found Cy-Fair Helping Hands, where for the past four years, she has served as Resource Director, volunteer coordinator, public speaker, and translator. Pat is a follower of the Catholic faith. She has been married to her husband, Robert, a NASA engineer, for 34 years. "I am honored to serve with our founder, Jean Dreyer. Not only does she have a genuine love for the marginalized in our community, but she is driven to serve. She brings a wealth of knowledge and is a wonderful

mentor for our staff."

Glenanne Robinson, Director of the ministry's Homeless Teen Initiative, is excited to work with the new directors. "Jean has a true heart for those living on the street. Her passion is evident to anyone she meets. Pat has a gift for resourcing both supplies and volunteers, and then making the best use of both. Together, these women have cast a strong vision for the future of CFHH."

About Cy-Fair Helping Hands Run entirely by a volunteer staff, Cy-Fair Helping Hands provides the basic physical needs, spiritual guidance, and mentoring needs for low-income individuals, families and the homeless in our community. CFHH serves approximately 250 clients monthly and distributes Compassion Bags to 100 homeless weekly. The ministry depends on community businesses, churches, schools, organizations, and individuals for monetary donations, as well as non-perishable food and toiletries to assist those that are living on the street and struggling to care for themselves and their families. Donations are accepted at the Cy-Fair Helping Hands office, 7510 Cherry Park Drive, Suite G, Houston, Texas 77095, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and the first and third Saturdays, from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Those living in Cy-Fair in need of food, encouragement, and prayer are welcome to come in and register at the dates and times listed above.

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