

# A celebration of community spirit



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A CITY'S SOUL

One of the great bonuses of working as a journalist is the number of special events and fundraisers you get to attend.

Over the years, I have been present at numerous ones — and I loved them all. Still, some stick in your mind — purely out of personal preference — as your favourites. For me, the Immigrants of Distinction by Immigrant Services Calgary and the Feast of Sound and Song by Mount Royal University's Conservatory stand at the top of the list.

But after a recent evening being entertained by the folks at Albi Homes Ltd., their fundraiser for SAIT Polytechnic students has now joined those other community events.

Albi Homes recently officially inaugurated its design studio, The Galleria, featuring 5,000 square feet, with an absolutely wonderful evening for a good cause — and to celebrate Albi founder Tom Mauro's 60th birthday.

The evening featured an exclusive cooking demonstration in the Tuscan-inspired gourmet "cucina" (kitchen) with celebrity chef David Rocco of Food Network Canada and TLN. Rocco was assisted by the Three Italian Mammams (Caterina Caracciolo, Vittoria Cioffi and Maria Giannatelli), all from Calgary.

The event also announced the creation of the Tom Mauro Endowment Fund in support of SAIT Polytechnic students.



Tom Mauro, left, with celebrity chef David Rocco, celebrated his 60th birthday with a food-filled gala and the creation of an endowment fund.

Courtesy, Nicole Zylstra, Albi Homes

"I had no idea about the development of the endowment fund," says Mauro. "Anyone who knows me knows that I am passionate about carpentry and Italian food. (The event) was a celebration of both of my passions with the added honour of the endowment fund."

Proceeds raised at the event, through donations and live auction items, will be allocated to the endowment fund.

For me, the evening was a celebration of a number of things that make Calgary

great. Food for one. Heck, if you are Italian you know the importance of food and wine and partaking in these with friends and family.

Second, it reminded me of the entrepreneurial spirit Calgarians continue to show to the rest of the country and to the world. From humble beginnings, Mauro has developed a company that shines with success in the marketplace.

Successful entrepreneurs, such as Brett Wilson and Tony Dilawri among many attending the event, were a

clear sign of the city's business acumen.

But perhaps most importantly the event was another awesome example of the city's community spirit.

Mauro was born in Albi, a small village in the region of Calabria, Italy.

Over the years, he and his wife Debra have been key philanthropists in the city giving money, time and resources to a variety of worthy causes.

From Italian folk dancers to schools to events dealing with many of life's challenges, the Mauro family

has been there to help out and to make a difference.

And to significantly impact this community, making it a better place to live for everyone.

There's even the Albi Community Events Cruiser initiative, which will attend certain events throughout the city where they will serve up food and fun.

And they're already planning for their next big fundraiser — Big Boys and Their Toys: An evening of luxury and inspiration. It's a charity event involving luxury cars with the proceeds

going to Home Front, an internationally recognized, multidisciplinary and collaborative response to domestic violence.

The Mauro family sets an example for all of us in this city.

Remember to enjoy life with family and friends.

Remember how hard work and the entrepreneurial spirit can lead to success.

And remember to always give back to the community.

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