

The Talk

# Cutting, styling hair a family affair

*It all started soon after Carmen Commisso and his brother Tony arrived from Italy*



SUZANNE BOURRET

Are you ready dahlings for a really hairy story about a family who makes waves together?

Meet **Vince Commisso**, of Hair Xtacy on Burlington's Brant Street, whose extended family has more than 100 hairstylists from Calgary to Thunder Bay, Burlington, Stoney Creek to Toronto and its suburbs. They own at least 28 hair salons across Canada.

It all started when his dad **Carmen** and his brother, **Tony**, got off the boat from Italy in the late '50s and started a hairdressing business in 1963 called La Flair on Guelph Line and New Street in Burlington. Then Vince's mother's brothers, **Rocco** and **Vito Minnella**, headed down from Thunder Bay to work in the salon. They learned and moved back to Thunder Bay to start their own business. They had a big family there and soon Vince's cousins started in the business, too.

In the late '70s, Vince's cousins, **Jimmy** and **Frank** and **Tony** Commisso, learned the business from his dad, too. They started their own shop, The Hair Resort in Grimsby and then moved it to Stoney Creek.

Meanwhile, the original hair pair, Carmen and Tony, closed La Flair and opened up Tony & Carmen's Hair Salon in Eastgate Square in 1973. They opened another salon on Brant Street and Upper Middle Road in the late '70s. Then each went on their own.



BARRY GRAY, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Members of the Commisso family, from left, Vince, Carmen Jr., Roberta, Rosetta, Joe, and Carmen Sr. seated in the front, all work in the hair salon business. There are more than 100 hairstylists in the extended family, from Calgary to Stoney Creek.

Carmen took over the Eastgate shop and Tony took the Brant Street and Upper Middle Road salon. Vince got into the business in 1985, his brother **Carmen** started in 1990 and **Joe** followed shortly after. They and their dad opened Hair Xtacy in 1992. Their sister, **Roberta**, joined the hair works in the mid-'90s and took over Uncle Tony's salon, three years ago (now called Hair Annex), on Brant Street and Upper Middle Road. Tony works

full time with Roberta. Thoroughly confused by now, dahlings? There's more. The Thunder Bay cousins got married and most of their children got into the business and it kept snowballing as second and third cousins joined the hair fair.

Vince's mother's (**Rosetta**) family certainly wasn't going to be left out of the hair affair, either. Rosetta's sister, **Laura Costa**, has three sons who joined the fun in Thunder Bay, and

eventually moved to Calgary to open businesses.

When they go to weddings, and you know Italians go to about six or more a year, it's like a hairdressers' convention.

"We all do our wives' hair and try to outdo each other. It's a friendly competition," says Vince, who enjoys close friendships with all his cousins.

They all go to hair shows to better themselves and guess what they talk

about when they get together? "We all talk about hair when we go out and the wives are rolling their eyes half the time. The weekend dinner at my mother's is like a staff meeting," says Vince, who figures they all have an artistic flair in their genes.

"The success of my dad and uncle paved the way."

Meanwhile, Dad, Carmen Sr., has a few things to say about all this family hair-raising affair. But that's if you can find him. He's either at one family shop or another.

He is now 67 and supposedly retired, but he often comes in to work at Xtacy, owned by Vince, Carmen, Joe and himself. And he also works at daughter Roberta's shop, too.

Carmen is justifiably proud. "I think I did my part. I encouraged them to follow me. I thought it would be good for them and it was."

He says their wins at hair competitions have encouraged them. They've all won firsts, seconds and thirds in both cutting and styling.

"They always come out with something."

In 1994, Vince and Joe qualified to compete in London, England, for Hair World Team Canada and in 2004 Vince qualified to compete in Milan. Carmen Jr., was Canadian champion for Allied Beauty Association in 1999 and competed in Germany in 2000. And wife and mother, Rosetta, has been behind them all the way. She shampoos and helps at the desk.

This weekend the Commisso family will head to the Allied Beauty Association competition at the Toronto Convention Centre. And sure enough, they'll be joined by other family members from Calgary, Thunder Bay and from around Toronto, too.

They well could be the largest hair-dressing family in Canada.



RON POZZER, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

The Rotary Club of Hamilton's wine and food tasting, at Liuna Station, included: Jim Commerford, Anne Bermingham, Donna Commerford, Grahame Meredith, Bob Munroe, Barbara MacKinnon and Norm Read.

## Seven Windows Restaurant to open in June on Aberdeen

Spice was officially uncorked by the Rotary Club of Hamilton Tuesday night as about 350 spent the evening tasting food and wine from 15 restaurants and 15 wineries at Liuna Station.

Here is what was scene and heard: **The Seven Windows Restaurant and Lounge** will open in June in the old Toronto Dominion bank at 432 Aberdeen Ave. near Dundurn Street.

Owners are **Jaqueline Penman**, **Calvin Nicholl**, **Vanessa Coles** and chef **Henry Staheli**, who says dining will be pure French bistro.

Plans are for a 60-seat dining room, 25-seat tapas bar, 50-seat garden patio and a buffet and à la carte brunch service.

**Chef Steven Popp** has spiced up his life with a business called Jet Set Spice Co. The chef-instructor with Liaison College of Culinary Arts started the company five years ago to bring gourmet, restaurant-quality culinary products to people who like to cook. His six products, which offer a basic recipe on the package, have really taken off in the last month, he says.

"We're launching our other eight spices at Burlington's Ribfest this year and we're also planning to launch a line of high-end loose leaf teas."

Jet Set Spices are available at 10 local outlets including Marilou's Market and Bernadino's in Burlington. For more information, call 905-561-5359.

Cases of a new retsina from Kechri Winery were flying out the door. This retsina, fermented with pine resin, offers a smooth taste of mild fruit flavours – not that distinct turpentine flavour The Talk recalls from a Greek trip. The 500-ml bottle is \$6.25 and once empty, the little pear-shaped bottle can be used as a charming vase.

You can try Kechribari Retsina at It's All Greek to Me, 1811 Main St. W., Whitney Plaza, or a case of 18 bottles (\$112.47) can be delivered by calling 416-630-7392.

More Talk tomorrow

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905-526-3305



## Air Supply

April 21 - 8:00pm  
Hamilton Place Theatre



## PAPA DUKE

FEATURING  
VIOLIN VIRTUOSO VASYL POPADIUK  
Studio Theatre  
April 13 - 8:00 pm

# StarTime

Call 905-527-7666  
For Tickets or on-line at www.ticketmaster.ca

Gift Certificates available at Copps Coliseum Box Office  
Inquire about our Casual Ice Rentals 905-346-3103

BIG TICKET EVENTS VISIT: www.hecfi.ca



**Doodlebops**  
Live in Concert  
April 16 - 1:30 pm  
Hamilton Place Theatre



**MELISSA O'NEIL & REX GOUDIE**  
April 20 - 8:00 pm  
Hamilton Place Theatre



**GEORGE STRAIT**  
with special guests  
Tracy Lawrence  
Miranda Lambert  
June 12 - 7:30 pm  
Copps Coliseum

**HAMILTON PLACE**  
BALLET JORGEN PRESENTS  
**ROMEO AND JULIET**  
April 6 - 8:00 pm **Tonight!**

**HAMILTON PHILHARMONIC**  
ORCHESTRA PRESENTS  
"GREAT LADIES OF SONG"  
April 8 - 8:00 pm

**BURLINGTON TEEN TOUR BAND**  
PRESENTS THE 8TH ANNUAL LINCOLN  
M. ALEXANDER CONCERT  
April 9 - 3:00 pm

**OPERA HAMILTON** PRESENTS  
"LA TRAVIATA"  
April 29, May 4 & 6, - 8:00 pm

**NANA MOUSKOURI**  
FAREWELL TOUR  
May 3 - 8:00 pm

**ALICE COOPER**  
WITH SPECIAL GUEST "HELIUM"  
May 7 - 8:00 pm

**THE CARL PALMER BAND**  
MUSIC OF EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER  
May 24 - 8:00 pm

**HAMILTON PHILHARMONIC**  
ORCHESTRA PRESENTS  
"MUSICAL PASSIONS"  
May 27 - 8:00 pm

**GERITOL FOLLIES** PRESENTS  
"FOLLIES TV CLASSICS"  
June 14 - 2:00 pm,  
June 15 & 16 - 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm  
For info or tickets: 905 528-8095

## STUDIO THEATRE

**PAPA DUKE** FEATURING VIOLIN  
VIRTUOSO VASYL POPADIUK  
April 13 - 8:00 pm

**CLASSICAL NOUVEAU** PRESENTS  
"LIVE MUSIC / SILENT FILM"  
BY ROBERT BRUCE  
May 5 - 8:00 pm

**COPPS COLISEUM**  
**HAMILTON BULLDOGS**  
vs. Manitoba April 9 - 4:00 pm  
vs. Cleveland April 12 - 7:30 pm

**HSBC STARS ON ICE**  
April 29 - 7:30 pm

**WILLIE NELSON** WITH THE  
NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND  
April 30 - 7:30 pm

**THE 2006 HAMILTON**  
INTERNATIONAL TATTOO  
June 10 - 7:30 ; June 11 - 2:30 pm  
**HAMILTON POLICE ASSOC.** PRESENTS  
**THE OLDIES TOUR** FEATURING THE  
DRIFTERS, & MORE  
June 24 - 7:30 pm

## HAMILTON CONVENTION CENTRE

**BEAU MONDE PRODUCTION'S**  
**HAMILTON-HALTON**  
**FALL BRIDAL SHOW**  
2006  
October 6-8

**VISION QUEST** PRESENTS  
**THE PSYCHIC SHOW**  
November 3-5