

# Patrons fundraiser for Vatican Museum

BY DAVID PARKER, CALGARY HERALD    AUGUST 18, 2009

Tom Mauro was born in Albi in the province of Catanzaro in southern Italy, so it's no surprise that he named his company Albi Homes. His family immigrated to Calgary when he was just three years old, but he's still a proud Italian, and he and his wife Debra, who serves as co-chair of the house-building firm with Tom, visit Italy as often as they can.

She says they make an effort to visit the Vatican and have toured the Holy See at least a dozen times. But on recent visits, they have been invited to tour the Vatican Museum with a personal guide and shown through sections of the museum not open to the general public.

That's because the Mauros are Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums, which allows them special privileges.

A member of the local chapter of the World Presidents Organization, Tom was introduced to the museum by a fellow member, Calgary businessman Murray McCann. It didn't take long for Tom and Debra to get thoroughly involved as Patrons of the Arts and recently Debra was invited to join the board of the Canadian chapter--the first Calgarian to receive the honour.

She is organizing a reception for Sept. 27 to welcome Father Mark Haydu, international co-ordinator of Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums, to Calgary to speak to other potential patrons.

The event will take place at the Ferrari Maserati of Alberta dealership on Meridian Road N. E. "What more Italian can you get than being amid Ferraris?" Tom says.

The need is great as the largest collection of art in the world is not supported directly by the Holy See and ticket sales only cover day-to-day costs. Patron donations are used to fund conservation projects, purchase equipment for restoration laboratories and accomplish capital improvements.

The Canadian chapter has taken on the restoration of the Santa Rosa project, a necropolis with an immense number of treasures discovered at the site of a proposed--but no longer --parking lot.

Eventually the public will be admitted, but until then only Patrons will get the chance to visit the site.

Anyone of any faith who is interested in art and/or history can be a Patron for as little as \$500 per person per year. It's a small price for the satisfaction of knowing you are caring for priceless works of art, plus the opportunity to be a Vatican Museum VIP.

The Mauros are passionate about their involvement as committed donors to the Vatican; it's a rewarding tie-in to his Italian roots.

His family lived in Bridgeland and after taking carpentry at SAIT Polytechnic, Tom began building homes "one at a time" with his brother Peter. In 1982, despite the fact the building industry was in the doldrums, he launched Albi Homes and began building in the Edgemont and Hawkwood communities. This year, the company, with a permanent staff of 80, will build 140 single-family semi-custom homes in McKenzie Towne, Auburn Bay, Cranston and Tuscany. The inner-city division has been revived.

As co-chairs, Tom and Debra leave the day-to-day running of Albi Homes to president Alan Klassen and their two sons Jason and Justin, who both have senior marketing roles in the company.

Kensington's loss is Uptown 17th Avenue's gain as Janice Beaton has decided to consolidate her three operations under one roof. Janice Beaton Fine Cheese will be relocating back to the Mount Royal district alongside her FARM and Caffe Beano at the corner of 17th Avenue and 9th Street S. W. at month end.

Not being able to reach a rent agreement for the location on the north side of the river caused the business decision, but her fans of fine cheese won't mind the extra few minutes to zip over the Louise Bridge to what will be a great gourmet destination in the trendy neighbourhood.

EDO Japan has been a remarkable success story for Calgary-based president and CEO Tom Donaldson. With the opening of his newest restaurant this week in Aspen Glen Landing Shopping Centre on 85th Street S. W., he celebrates his 70th location in Western Canada. And 26 of those are in the Calgary area.

Latin scholars will love the name the city's assessment department has given to their new home in the Deerfoot Place: Ad Valorem is so appropriate.

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