Mario Spagnolo

OCTOBER 12, 2025



Mario was born in Zadar on April 12, 1934. At the time it was Italy but then it changed to Yugoslavia after the war, and then again to now Croatia.

His father Francesco was a short, strong Sicilian and his Mother Albina a tall, Northern Beauty. Together they raised 11 beautiful Children: Fortunata, Francesca, Ada, Benito, Nora, Elena, Tonci, Mario, Luciano, Armando & Mariuccia. Although the family suffered great hardship during the war including starvation, and both my Nonno Francesco and Zia Francesca were killed. Until this day I am incapable of throwing away food after hearing Mario's stories of surviving famine as a child. Then The Spagnolo bond grew thick and strong, as the remaining siblings all still have magnificent love for each other. I have rec'd beautiful messages from our family that can't be here today from Italy, Florida and Ontario. My Dad told me not long before he left us, that he was looking forward to seeing his Mother again as he loved her so.

Mario then moved West to New York City in the late 50's as many Italians did at the time. He worked as a soccer player, and also a waiter. People used to stop him on the street asking for his autograph as he looked so much like Anthony Perkins at the time. Later in life, many thought he had an uncanny resemblance to the great Robert DeNiro. But then again, The Godfather was always one of Mario's favourite movies!

Mario then moved to Vancouver and married Carmina in 1958. First daughter Sabina born in 1959, 7 years later myself in 1966, and lastly Daniel in 1977. People are often fascinated by the spread of our ages. It was always a busy household

filled with lots of friends and music. My childhood friend Jo-Anne used to love coming to my house as she seemed to find comfort in the chaos. I have many memories of waking up on Sunday mornings to the sound of my Dad playing his acoustic while I could smell my mom's delicious sugo simmering! Mario loved his pasta, and he could eat A LOT of it!

Mario loved his 3 children and five grandchildren immensely; and I know how much Jaden, Francesca, Dario, Farrah and Adry appreciated his wild & racy sense of humour. To say he was both confident and humorous would be an understatement. He could really turn up the accent when he wanted to – my friend Renee' noticed he was the only human she'd ever met who's accent got stronger the longer he stayed in Canada.

I also feel a need to try and express my deepest gratitude to my sister-in-law Jessy as the love and utmost respect she always demonstrated to my dad. He loved you so much and I know you both had a very special bond. So Thank you.

I was always so impressed as a young girl when the Red Cross would phone our home as my Dad had a rare blood type (which I think was O-negative?) and he would quickly drive off to the hospital to kindly donate blood with his generous heart.

Mario's passions were many; he taught his children to appreciate his love for nature and animals. From his beautiful black lab Deanna to his beloved white bird Loretto and many green finches Peter seemed to be the popular name. Mario's love for fishing has now been passed on to both his son Daniel and grandson Dario. I know he's quite honoured by this. Mario loved to be on the water and all three of his children have inherited this passion.

Mario's favourite sports to watch were soccer and boxing. I know his favourite boxer was Rocco Francis Marchegiano which of course inspired the Rocky movie. Another Fantastic Italian film he loved! He also loved the Count of Monte Christo

and Angel Eyes with Jlo.

Mario also always had a fierce love for cars and became a mechanic by trade. He managed a Mohawk Oil gas station for many years (where his nephew Morris worked). I know he enjoyed teaching and helping his nephews and others about fixing cars. I have many vivid recollections of being excited to go on a road trip to go camping and fishing as a chid, and if a car was broken down on the side of the road he could not drive by. He had to pull over and see if he could help somehow. At the time, I felt impatient but now as an adult I've learned to admire this generous quality. He also used to buy used cars, pimp them up and sell them for extra money. I used to enjoy helping him mask the car so he could paint it. He then bravely attended BCIT in the 80's and received several certificates which are here to see today. He did so well even with English not being his first language, and I'm sure this was not easy. However, he still had the time to set up a blind date with one of his younger school mates with my friend Chrissy who can't be here today.

MUSIC - Our family of five all have an immense love for music. My father began singing as a child in the choir in the Catholic school he attended in Venice. He also taught himself to play the guitar and keyboards. He had a deep love for Opera and serenaded the Dr's and Nurses in hospice until the very end. He would argue with the Dr's if I'm so sick how come I can still sing like this?! His favourite was always Pavarotti of course.

Later in life Mario was lucky enough to find love again with Bonnie. They travelled across the country many times with West Coast Amusements and they both enjoyed many years of happiness together. I'm so happy to have her daughter Trucy and family here today. I also note that all three of Mario's children inherited his love for travel and exploring. Mario travelled back to Italy several times, to Peru to visit Daniel and his family and many times to Cabo to visit Sabina. It's funny as there was a story of my dad running away as a child to try and work in the circus. So I guess his dream really did come true.

Besides pasta, I would guess fresh caught fish and grapes were some of his favourites to enjoy. He was never really a drinker but later in life really did enjoy a glass of sweet wine or champagne.

When I think of my dad I think of strength, passion, intelligence, confidence & humour. I know his influence will continue to live on amongst all us here today. *Pappachino thank you for your love, your laughter, and your unwavering pride.*

You will always be my hero

Messages of Condolence

This is a beautiful tribute to Zio Mario. □□ Thank you for sharing it. Zio I will miss our phone conversations, and I will miss your humor. Rest In peace Zio Mario, I love you and I will miss you. Say Hi to all our family. □□♥□□□♥□□

— Franca Colavolpe

Sorry Mario unfotunatly this is out fate!But for sure ww will see you again in excellent shape the day of our resurectionNow you sleep in peace Seya!

— Marc
