

# The Venesian Inn

*A Touch of Italy in the Ozarks since 1947*



**VENESIAN - INN - TONTITOWN, ARK. - PHONE PL. 1-3182**

Reservations Accepted - Not Required - Steaks - Italian Food - Ozark Fried Chicken

## A Short History

For more than 65 years, the Venesian Inn has been a treasured part of the Northwest Arkansas community. Germano Gasparotto, an Italian by birth, opened the restaurant in 1947. A few years later, he sold the Venesian Inn to John and Mary Granata, also native Italians, who passed it on to their daughter Alice Leatherman. Alice, the beloved prankster, served customers at the restaurant for many years with her fun-loving nature and commitment to fine Italian food always “made from scratch.”

The family tradition was then passed on to her nephew Johnny Mhoun and his wife Linda in 1992. With dedication, hard work and a focus on high quality food and service, Johnny and Linda continued to draw people from all over the area. The sense of “family” is also reflected in the fact that some of the restaurant’s employees have been here for over 30 years.

According to Linda Mhoun, the Venesian Inn’s food reflects the rich heritage of the Italians who settled in Tontitown. The restaurant’s basic menu of spaghetti and fried chicken is “still made from scratch, just like always,” as are the homemade rolls, which Linda lovingly prepares herself. Today’s diners enjoy their meals at the same wooden tables installed by Gasparotto in 1947. The brick walls and hardwood room dividers are also original.

Mhoun says some of her regular customers recall the days when a Venesian Inn #9 Steak cost only \$1.50. One of the restaurant’s original waitresses, Elsie Mae Pinalto, explains the Venesian Inn charm is what keeps customers coming back again and again: “People who came here as children bring their children here. They say it’s neat to see everthing the same.”