

Federico Venturini, Chef Viola Tagliaferri & Phil Igneri

An Italian-American Story of Family, Tradition and the American Dream

The story of Federico Venturini and Chef Viola Tagliaferri is one of courage, sacrifice, family, entrepreneurship, and an unwavering belief in the American Dream.

Originally from Gualdo Tadino, a small town in the heart of Umbria, Italy, Federico and Viola made the life-changing decision to move with their family to the United States in 2018.

They arrived in America carrying with them something far more valuable than certainty: their Italian traditions, a strong work ethic, a passion for hospitality and food, an entrepreneurial spirit, and the determination to create a better future for their family.

Starting over in a new country was not easy. They had to adapt to a new language, a different culture, and an entirely different way of doing business. But the challenges of beginning again became part of what drove them forward.

Food became their way of preserving their roots while building a new life in America.

The Beginning of Pizzicata

In 2019, Federico and Viola opened Pizzicata in Carefree, Arizona.

Their vision was never simply to create another Italian restaurant. They wanted to introduce Arizona to the authentic flavors, traditions, and hospitality they had grown up with in Italy.

Pizzicata became Arizona's first certified Pinseria, bringing the tradition of Pinsa Romana to the state while also serving homemade pasta and authentic regional Italian cuisine.

Federico brought the entrepreneurial vision, energy, and passion for hospitality, while Chef Viola became the culinary heart of the restaurants. Her cuisine reflects the traditions of their Italian upbringing while embracing the experiences and opportunities of their new American home.

Meeting Phil Igneri — When Friendship Became Family

Along their journey, Federico and Viola met Phil Igneri — a relationship that would become much more than a business partnership.

Phil was born in New York to parents of Italian heritage and moved to Arizona approximately 40 years ago. Despite growing up thousands of miles apart, when Federico, Viola, and Phil met, they immediately recognized something familiar in one another.

They shared the same traditions, the same importance of family, the same culture around the dinner table, the same work ethic, and the same pride in their Italian heritage.

What began as a friendship and business relationship gradually became something deeper.

They became one family.

Phil's Italian-American experience and Federico and Viola's journey directly from Italy created a natural bridge between two generations and two versions of the same story: Italians who came to America, built their lives here, and never forgot where they came from.

Together, they found that the traditions and values passed down through their families were remarkably similar, regardless of whether those traditions had traveled from Italy to New York generations earlier or arrived directly from Umbria in 2018.

That connection became an important part of the foundation on which they continued building their businesses.

Pomodoro Italian Grill & Seafood

In 2020, only two years after arriving in the United States, Federico and Viola opened their second restaurant concept, Pomodoro Italian Grill & Seafood.

Pomodoro represented another step forward in their mission to showcase authentic Italian cuisine in Arizona.

The restaurant would soon receive one of the most meaningful recognitions of their journey.

Pomodoro participated in the Italian television reality show *Little Big Italy*, a program dedicated to discovering authentic Italian restaurants around the world.

The Arizona competition included several established and well-known Italian restaurants from the area, including Andreoli Italian Grocer and Pomo.

Pomodoro won the competition and was recognized by *Little Big Italy* as the **Best Authentic Italian Restaurant in Arizona**.

For Federico and Viola, the recognition meant much more than winning a television competition.

Only a few years earlier, they had left their small hometown in Italy and started their lives again in a country that was completely new to them. Now, the authenticity of the food, culture, and traditions they had brought with them was being recognized on Italian television.

It was confirmation that staying true to their roots had been the right choice.

Continuing to Grow

The journey did not stop there.

In 2023, Federico, Viola, and their partners continued their expansion by opening **Pizzicata Mesa**, bringing their philosophy of authentic Italian food and hospitality to another Arizona community.

Then, in December 2025, they opened **Pizzicata Glendale**, their largest and most ambitious Pizzicata project to date.

With each restaurant came new challenges, new investments, new employees, and new responsibilities. But every opening represented another chapter in the same story that began when Federico and Viola arrived from Italy.

Over the course of only several years, they have opened **four restaurants in Arizona**, built businesses generating millions of dollars in annual revenue, created employment and opportunities for dozens of people, and served thousands of guests.

Their restaurants have also received recognition from local media and the Arizona dining community, while maintaining the philosophy that made the original Pizzicata successful: authentic Italian food, genuine hospitality, and the belief that guests should feel as though they have been welcomed into an Italian home.

More Than Restaurants

For Federico, Viola, and Phil, the greatest accomplishment is not simply the number of restaurants they have opened.

It is what those restaurants represent.

They represent a family that left a small town in Italy with the courage to begin again.

They represent an Italian-American family whose roots traveled from Italy to New York and eventually to Arizona.

And they represent what happened when those two journeys unexpectedly crossed paths.

Together, Federico, Viola, and Phil discovered that they shared not only a passion for business but the same fundamental values: **family, loyalty, hard work, hospitality, respect for tradition, and pride in their Italian heritage.**

Those values transformed a partnership into a family.

Today, their businesses employ dozens of people and contribute to the communities they serve. Through their restaurants, they continue introducing guests to authentic Italian food and culture while creating opportunities for the people who work alongside them.

Their story is ultimately about much more than restaurants.

It is about immigration.

It is about entrepreneurship.

It is about friendship becoming family.

It is about preserving Italian heritage while embracing America.

And it is about the opportunity this country gave them to dream bigger than they ever imagined.

Federico and Viola began their journey in a small town in Umbria.

Phil's family's journey began generations earlier, when his Italian roots found a new home in America.

Their paths eventually came together in Arizona.

Different journeys. The same traditions. The same values. And today, one family.

Together, they continue building their version of the American Dream — while proudly carrying Italy with them every step of the way.

And their story is still being written.