



Fermin Sanchez

YES VIRGINIA, THERE IS A BRUNO

Actually, there was a Bruno. That we discovered a few weeks ago when we caught up with Bruno's Market owner/manager, Fermin Sanchez. A big, jovial man with an easy and welcoming manner, Mr. Sanchez sat with us on one of the benches in front of his market and deli. Forthcoming would be an understatement when describing this man. He was open to every question we posed and even asked a few of his own. Here's a sampling:

Let's begin with a question so many locals have been asking through the years—who is Bruno?

His name was Vince Bruno. He first owned a market at Ocean and San Carlos called Kip's in the 40s and 50s. He then bought this existing business and named it after himself. But before he moved to this location, Junipero and 6th, this market was named Pilot's and then Morton's. The building was built in the early 50s. I bought Bruno's in 1980.

We understand this market is a family affair.

You're right there. We all worked the aisles and counters and many of us still do. My mother and father, Kay and Alex were here every day, all day. Now the family consists of Kerry, my wife, Ryan, my son, and my two daughters, Kristie and Alicia. In all, Bruno's has a staff of 35. Not bad for a mom and pop operation.

What does Bruno's offer that other markets do not besides the convenience of shopping in the Village?

We certainly give our customers service. Beyond that we're happy to take special orders for delicacies, unusual products and foods. We're proud to say we offer charge accounts. And—what do you know—we deliver. Another thing that our loyal customers have come to

appreciate is our meats and our deli. We have a complete kitchen at Bruno's where five chefs and helpers prepare fresh specialties every day.

Who are your customers? Certainly local people but what about visitors and tourists?

I'd say our locals, Carmel, Carmel Valley, even Pebble Beach comprise about 75% of our business. Of course in the summer months we serve a great number of out-of-town visitors.

Surf and Sand, that's a Bruno's business also?

It is. We have a complete liquor department, some sundries, DVD rentals. Stick around, we're planning some exciting changes at Surf and Sand very soon.

Other than your intense working schedule at Bruno's how have you involved yourself in the community—in Carmel-by-the-Sea?

You're right, I am a busy person, but over the years I've involved myself with the Carmel Youth Center and the Mayor's Youth Fund. Very satisfying. I do what I can when I can.

You seem a very contented man. Many business operators find the going rough these days. And you, you've just greeted four or five people since we've been sitting here.

Let me just tell you, every day's a pleasure coming to work. My employees are family, just like my own family. I wouldn't want to live in any other part of this country. And to be in Carmel every day is a gift. I seem to know everyone and many folks stop by for a chat. Look, the small business is going to be a thing of the past if it's not already in some towns and cities. The competition is fierce so it's really service and specialties and location and convenience that keep the little guy going. I can tell you we're not going anywhere. Business is good and that's gratifying. Who doesn't know where the supermarkets are; where the drugstores are—and they're selling everything from bread to cereal to ice cream to lawnmowers. We'll just keep doing what we do and be thankful to our customers. So you say I'm contented—yes, I'm a happy guy.

Thank you, Fermin. And congratulations on your Certificate of Appreciation from the Carmel Residents Association.

Oh, before I forget, please feel free to call me if I can be of any help with your gatherings or meetings or special events. Just as you appreciate Bruno's, I appreciate the CRA.