



# John Caminiti

SEP 26, 1925 - DEC 30, 2010



Scan to Visit

# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
-----------------------	--------



## John Caminiti

SEP 26, 1925 - DEC 30, 2010

**J**ohn Caminiti Born: Sept. 26, 1925 Died: Dec. 30, 2010 Survived by: Wife, Betty of Sacramento; sons, Peter of Garfield, N.J., and John Jr. of Carmichael; daughter, Alice Caminiti Kardooni of Sacramento; brothers, Joseph of Rancho Cordova, and Anthony of Carmichael; 10 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Caminiti, an Italian immigrant who founded and ran Sorrento Italian Kitchen restaurant in Carmichael for 45 years, died Dec. 30 of lung cancer. He was 85. Mr. Caminiti enjoyed telling visitors that his establishment was the first Italian restaurant in Carmichael. The area was mostly empty fields when he and his wife, Betty, opened near Madison and Manzanita avenues in 1960. The mom-and-pop operation quickly became a landmark, drawing customers hungry for large plates of home cooked lasagna, spaghetti, pizza and other traditional Italian dishes at modest prices. Most were prepared by Mr. Caminiti, who started cooking each day at 6:30 a.m., worked until late at night and made his sauces from scratch. "I'm from the old country," he told *The Bee* in 1981. "I'm very sentimental. My cooking comes from the heart." Mr. Caminiti was born in 1925 in Sicily, where his family grew and exported citrus fruit. He studied at a Catholic seminary but gave up plans for the priesthood to serve in the Italian Carabinieri, or military police, during World War II. He left home for a new life in America in 1950 and arrived in New York. Although unable to speak English, he found work in the restaurant business with cooking skills he learned from his mother. He began planning his own restaurant while working at Mama Leone's, a famous family-style eatery in Manhattan that was popular with celebrities. He moved to the Sacramento area and worked at several restaurants before opening Sorrento. "My mother had family here and they came out to visit once," said his daughter, Alice Caminiti Kardooni. "He fell in love with California because the weather reminded him of Sicily." Mr. Caminiti enjoyed fishing on the American and Sacramento rivers and deep-sea expeditions near Santa Cruz during his early years.



## Obituary

**John Caminiti**

SEP 26, 1925 - DEC 30, 2010

---

He belonged to Masonic Lodge Oak Plains 789 and the Shriners, and he counted many local restaurant owners as friends. Besides his wife of 56 years, Betty, he is survived by their two children and a son from a previous marriage that ended in divorce. Mr. Caminiti was a gregarious host at Sorrento, which closed several years ago. During kitchen breaks, he ventured into the dining room to chat with customers and perform Italian songs with his daughter and son. "He loved going from table to table, visiting everyone," Kardooni said. "My dad was very exciting."



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring John by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit