

Sweethearts for Sixty Years

By Cathy Dausman



Alfred and Catherine Belluomini in 2012.

Photo Cathy Dausman



Just married - the Belluominis 60 sixty years ago.

“The century has changed,” notes Catherine Zunino Belluomini, since her marriage at 19 to Alfred Belluomini, but their marriage continues. The Moraga couple celebrates their 60th wedding anniversary next week with a family luncheon for 28 guests in Lafayette. Quite a different scene from the day they spoke their vows. Married at St. Frances de Sales church in Oakland, the couple was greeted by 1400 guests at the brand new Colombo Club. The Italian social club was so new, the bride worried it might not be finished in time to hold their reception. But hold it, they did.

There were so many people at Colombo Club’s first wedding reception it required two dinner sittings to accommodate everyone. Dining was downstairs, drinking and dancing was upstairs, with

second floor wraparound balconies for guests to keep an eye on each other. By today’s standards, the Belluomini’s guest list might be considered unwieldy, but being raised in two local Italian families, it was just standard procedure. “Everybody was invited,” said Alfred. That included parents and children, cousins, grandparents, even work friends. But not all the wedding guests mingled easily. Alfred explains that their parents were first generation Italian Americans, and each married someone who spoke the same dialect. But Catherine was from Northern Italy and spoke Genovese dialect, while Alfred, from Luca, spoke a Tuscan dialect. By the third generation, Alfred laughs, “they were marrying non-Italians!”

The couple met at the Ali Baba nightclub in Oakland, where

Catherine emphasizes “there was never any trouble!” “I liked what I saw,” says Alfred of his wife. He became a structural engineer, working for Bethlehem Steel; she worked at Merritt Business College. They raised three children and now enjoy three grandchildren. Their marriage was founded on common ground: “family, food and religion.” Marriage, they say, changes with the times. They advise prospective couples to “give and take” and to expect changes every 10 years or so.

They seem to have taken their own advice, as well, because the Belluominis also formally celebrated their 25th, 40th and 50th anniversaries, and they have the 8x10 photos to prove it! Asked if they plan to stick around for an encore 75th anniversary celebration, Catherine smiles and admits “my sister has asked about that!”

Will Durst to Headline “Live at the Orinda” March 2nd

By Laurie Snyder



Will Durst - PointTaken

Photo Junior Hansen Jr.

Schizophrenically described as “a modern day Will Rogers” by *The Boston Globe* and as “The Dark Prince of Doubt” by *The Washington Post*, political satirist Will Durst is, in fact, a nice guy. Bugs Bunny is one of his heroes. Always “the object of someone’s mayhem or bedlam,” says Durst, Bugs “never instigated an altercation. Not once.” But he didn’t back down, either.

Durst, a baby boomer “forged in the crucible of the Vietnam War,” has been doing stand up since 1974 and earning a living at it since 1981. Like many Americans, he grew up watching Carson, and says that his whole family made each other laugh. “Humor was a currency around the dining room table.” The five-time Emmy and seven-time Stand-Up of the Year

nominee has appeared on venues as diverse as the Fox Network, Showtime, Letterman, and the BBC. Durst has also received accolades for a solo, off-Broadway show, “The All American Sport of Bipartisan Bashing.”

Currently, he’s hard at work mining the humor gold of the current election cycle in “Elect to Laugh! With Will Durst & Friends,” his popular show at The Marsh in San Francisco, and also performs for corporate and professional association events.

“You cannot believe how lush and rich a tropical forest,” he says of the Republican primaries, as well as the Obama years. The show has remained fresh and topical as candidates and hot-button issues have continued to rise and flame out one state after another.

“The way it’s lining up,” he cautiously predicts of the Republican primaries, “it could well go to the convention.”

Durst is also somewhat of a golf god. He was invited back to blog for the Master’s for a fourth year by Augusta National while being interviewed for this article.

All of this is very good news for Bay Area residents who need a laugh break. Durst will be headlining the Orinda Chamber of Commerce’s third annual “Live at the Orinda” comedy night on March 2nd.

The event will be held at the Orinda Theatre, and will raise funds to support local non-profit organizations, as well as Chamber programs, and promises to “be one of the best,” says the

event’s originator and Chamber Director, Rick Kattenburg. Co-collaborators include Tommy T’s Comedy Clubs and The Lamorinda Film & Entertainment Foundation.

Comedians Kabir Singh (Kabeezy), Dan St. Paul, and Johnny Steele will also perform and, for the first time, there will be live music, along with a recep-

tion featuring full no-host bars, beginning at 6:45 p.m. Master of Ceremonies Michael Fender will also lend his voice, presenting music from Sinatra to Lady GaGa. Tickets are \$35 in advance (ages 17 and older) or \$40 at the door (if available). See the Orinda Chamber of Commerce web site for more details: www.orindachamber.org.

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