

The logo for the organization, featuring the word "ohmpa" in a stylized, lowercase font with a blue background and white text.

# Asphalttopics

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# GAZZOLA PAVING

## CELEBRATING A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

# Company P R O F I L E



CELEBRATING ITS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY



EXHIBITION STADIUM SHOWING THE RACE TRACK BUILT BY GAZZOLA, CIRCA 1990

Virginio Gazzola arrived in Canada in 1925 part of a huge wave of immigration that would make Toronto the second largest Italian-speaking city in the world. And like so many other Italian immigrants Virginio turned to construction to help support his wife Rose and their young family and build a new life.

In 1952, Virginio started a landscaping business and quickly discovered that he was a born entrepreneur. He had an ability to wring every bit of value from a project, often salvaging copper pipe and other metal that he found and selling to the local scrap metal dealers. But starting a new business is never easy. Antoinette, Virginio's daughter, still remembers standing on street corners with the rest of the family, selling Christmas trees to help make ends meet.

Two years later, Mark, Virginio's eldest son, joined the business. He was just fifteen years old and needed a special permit to drive the dump truck that, along with a roller, constituted the family's entire investment in equipment.

The landscaping business started to grow and with it came a new opportunity. Clients wanted asphalt driveways and the Gazzolas found themselves in the paving business. But this was still very much an off the cuff enterprise that kept the family scrambling. Not for them, the luxury of an office or their own yard.

"We used to meet at the Supertest Gas Station at Eglinton and Caledonia Road where we parked the equipment," recalls Mark Gazzola.

It would be 1956 before the Gazzolas rented their first office. The equipment, however, still had to be parked across the street from what is presently Knob Hill Farms on Weston Road at the old British North American gas station.

Virginio's children were, by now, becoming more involved in the day to day operations. Mark worked fulltime in operations, Antoinette did the bookkeeping and when their younger brother, Vern, turned fifteen, he too signed on. For additional help, the family looked to friends and acquaintances from the area, some of whom are still with the company today.

As the business grew, it became obvious that the company needed its own premises if it was to continue to prosper so in 1962 the family bought a building and yard on Toryork Road. It would be the headquarters of the operation for the next thirteen years.

In 1975, the Gazzolas acquired Martan Contracting, a sewer and watermain company, and moved the entire operation to Martan's yard in Concord, Ontario.

Virginio passed away in 1981 just before the family managed to fulfill what had been a long held dream – owning their own asphalt plant.

# Gazzola Paving BACKGROUND



VERN & ANTOINETTE, CIRCA 1952

In 1982, Vern and Mark, always on the lookout for a bargain, went to a Ritchie Brothers Auction with their friends, Cosimo and Mike Crupi.

“One of the items up for bid was a used asphalt plant. It was too good an opportunity to pass up,” recalls Vern Gazzola. “We made the decision on the spot.”

A few minutes and \$80,000 later, Vern, Mark, Cosimo and Mike had an asphalt plant and a partnership.

Called Crushall, the new business was set up on Martingrove Road in Rexdale, a Toronto suburb near the airport. The Gazzola and Crupi partnership also established a concrete recycling operation downtown at Spadina and Lakeshore that supplied crushed aggregate for the booming downtown development in the 1980's and, most notably, for the Skydome, the construction of which started in 1986. During this era, the grandchildren had begun to join the firm.

In 1988, Crupi and Gazzola decided to go their separate ways – Gazzola kept the crushing operation, Crupi the asphalt plant. To re-establish the company's asphalt production, Vern Gazzola bought a DM-71 Barber Greene plant that had been operating in Pincher Creek, Alberta and set it up at a yard on Attwell Road in Rexdale. When work on the Skydome was completed, the crushing plant was also moved to Rexdale eventually joining the asphalt plant at the Attwell Road facility.

# of employees: 100

Geographic market: Greater Toronto Area

Plants: Asphalt and Recycled Crushed Aggregate -Toronto (Etobicoke), ON

#### Operations:

- ◇ Road building and reconstruction
- ◇ Asphalt production
- ◇ Recycled aggregate production
- ◇ Latex concrete production
- ◇ Winter snow maintenance

#### Asphalt Plant:

400 tonne per hour combination Drum/Batch/Coater asphalt plant by Astec and Barber Greene DM 71 with 600-tonne hot storage silos

#### Key Personnel:

President: Mark Gazzola Sr.

Vice-President: Vern Gazzola

Treasurer: Antoinette Lawson

Accounts Payable Manager: Vickie Piscione

Controller: Evelyn Dayman

Personnel Manager: Catherine Hojjevac

Manager of Estimating: Adrian Van Niekerk

Estimators: Mark Gazzola Jr., Jerry McLaughlin

Operations Manager: Virgil Gazzola

General Superintendents: Bob Boyes, Sonny Needham, Don Jollimore, Tino Piscione

Purchasing and Logistics: Henry Viola

Executive Assistant: Julie Lofranco

Asphalt Plant: Ross Shields, Don O'Neill

Chief Surveyor: Bob Karp

Quality Control Manager: Solomon Anduaem

Head Mechanic: Fausto Mussato

Ownership: Family

Related Companies: Attwell Haulage; Camp 6 Contractors; Martan Contracting

#### Awards:

- ◇ 2000 Paver of the Year (MTO Central Region)
- ◇ Pioneers of Construction Award in Toronto to Mark and Vern Gazzola for their contribution to the growth of Toronto's infrastructure.

Community Support: Gazzola Paving provides support to many local charities including CNIB, Foster Homes, local police associations and sports teams



PAVING HIGHWAY 27, 2001



In 1997, having outgrown the Martan Contracting yard in Concord, Gazzola Paving moved to Carlingview Drive and built a new modern office and shop facility with plenty of room for expansion. The new facility was officially opened in 1998 by the then Minister of Transportation, Al Palladini.

The company has seen its share of characters through the years, and rarely does a day go by when acquaintances from the past don't stop by to share a coffee and recall some of the stories from the old days.

### THE LAST WORD

'Mark and Vern Gazzola have earned the respect of the entire industry by being pioneers in paving the landscape of our quality roads in Toronto for the past 50 years.

Anyone who knows them, realizes that they are genuine, no-nonsense individuals who always wear their hearts on their sleeves. Honour and integrity have been the cornerstone of Gazzola's success.'

*Don Wilson,  
Dufferin Aggregates* ♦

### POTTERY ROAD HILL DESERVES A GAZZOLA

*Slinger, a columnist for the Toronto Star, waxed eloquently about "Gazzola" in a July 25, 1985 article. There was something about the name that he liked:*

"Gazzola is my favourite name in paving. It is my favourite name in anything... I wish it were a verb, or at least a noun. How's your gazzola doing? Let's gazzola that, then we won't have to worry about it ever again.

It's got brawn. But it's not just some muscle-bound lug of a word, it has character too.

It kind of grabs you the way it wouldn't if you went to see the Sistine Chapel and you said Who did that ceiling? and they told you Alf Smith and Sons, Fresco Contractors. I'm sure they do excellent work... but it doesn't have the ring of Michelangelo.

I think you want a Michelangelo to pave the Pottery Road hill.

(And Pottery Road leads to Mortimer Avenue)... a magnificent street. Someday I intend to pen a proper paean to Mortimer Ave. Then you'll understand what it is about it that makes my heart go all 'gazzola'.

Road builders don't get a chance to sign their work. Once the construction signs come down, few remember who was responsible for the care, the attention and the craftsmanship involved. Here are some of the more notable projects that Gazzola Paving has worked on in the last fifteen years:

- ♦ Front Street Roads and Streetscape at the Metro Convention Centre
- ♦ Dismantling of the Burlington Skyway Bridge
- ♦ Roads and Streetscape at the Toronto Skydome
- ♦ Roads at the Air Canada Centre (awarded 'Best of the Best' by PCL Constructors)
- ♦ Tower Park West at CN Tower
- ♦ Construction of various phases of Harbourfront Corporation Development
- ♦ Runway 15L-33R at Toronto International Airport
- ♦ Roads at the new Sheppard Subway at Leslie St. and Bayview Stations 9 to be opened in 2002)
- ♦ Various sections of Highways 401, 427 and 410 in the Toronto area
- ♦ Reconstruction of the Hunter St. Bridge in Peterborough (Historical)
- ♦ Reconstruction of numerous Toronto roads (Yonge, University, Avenue Road, Lake Shore, Gardiner Expressway, Spadina)
- ♦ Speedway at Exhibition Stadium (since demolished)
- ♦ Site Preparation for the World Economic Summit Meeting in Toronto in 1986
- ♦ In 2000, Gazzola sent snow removal equipment to assist in the cleanup after the ice storm. It also sent equipment to help with the recent snow emergency in Buffalo, New York.



NEW GAZZOLA PLANT, CIRCA 1988