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TODAY'S MUG 02.10.09

FOOD

DiPalo's

If it wouldn't get annoying, we'd happily write about **DiPalo's**, 200 Grand [Mott] 212.226.1033, every few weeks. No retailer in all of New York does Italian provisions better.

This small family business, which opened in 1925, maintains a 1950's vibe in a 2.0 world. You want a taste? Here. Not sure about an olive oil? They'll grab a roll, slice a couple of pieces, pour on different oils for you to compare. There's a line? So what? No one rushes here—that would miss the point entirely.

If you've never had the once-impossible-to-get **culatello**, don't wait any longer. Whether or not the pig that gave of its thigh might have amounted to much in life, surely the best outcome under the circumstances is to be involved in a culatello. It's a cured meat that leaves prosciutto in the dust.

You should never leave DiPalo's without a piece of **Parmigiano Reggiano**—you'll never buy it from Fairway again. If Louis DiPalo is around, he'll explain to you the characteristics of the cheese depending on the time of the year it was made. And when you get it home, you'll taste a creaminess that you never knew could be there, plus all the nuttiness and salty caramel flavors you could ever want.

Extra virgin olive oils are never in short supply at whatever cross-street you find yourself. We'd make a special trip to DiPalo's, though, for their **Fattoria Il Peraccio**, made from Frantoio olives. It's rich and peppery and slightly bitter, making it the happiest of sitz baths for any bread you dip into it.

Just west of the store is the fledgling **Enoteca DiPalo**, run by Louis DiPalo's son, Sam, where you can pick up a bottle from any of Italy's 20 wine regions.

Virtually everything at DiPalo's is superb. But here's the thing about the place: You always leave in a better mood than when you came in. Has anyone *ever* felt that way about Fairway?

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