

## Delaware family keeps cheesemaking tradition alive

**BY DORIS HENRIQUE**  
**Delaware**  
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**NEWARK, Del.** — If you like Italian food and you eat in Delaware, you're probably already a fan of Fierro's, whether you know it or not. This Wilmington-based family business has been supplying Delawareans with quality ricotta and mozzarella cheeses since 1928. Today, their products are available in specialty stores and supermarkets throughout much of the mid-Atlantic region. You'll also find their cheeses inside the

creamy lasagnas and other dishes served in many area restaurants, as well as on top of lots of local pizza. Fans of M. Fierro and Sons, Inc., say this little company produces some of the best ricotta and mozzarella you're likely to find anywhere on the East Coast. The Fierro's think so, too. "Our cheese is tops, says Mike Fierro, carefully dipping into a vat of mozzarella curd just approaching the "harping" stage. "This is because we still give it the kind of special attention it takes to produce

good old-fashioned flavor and texture." He ought to know. Grandson and namesake of the company's founder, he's the guy who supervises daily production of mozzarella in their small plant at the junction of 11th and Union streets. He says there's a fine art to quality cheesemaking. Partly this depends on using quality ingredients. But careful control of each stage of the process counts, too. And each cheesemaker has his own special techniques to ensure success. These, of

course, are a carefully guarded trade secret. Fierro's is one of the last of Delaware's milk processors. These are a vanishing breed, according to Delaware extension dairy specialist George Haenlein. You used to be able to find milk-processing plants all over the state—some making (Turn to Page C29)



Mike Fierro (left) chats with plant manager (by steaming vat) while worker at right operates machine that packages freshly made ricotta at M. Fierro & Sons, one of Delaware's few remaining cheesemaking firms.

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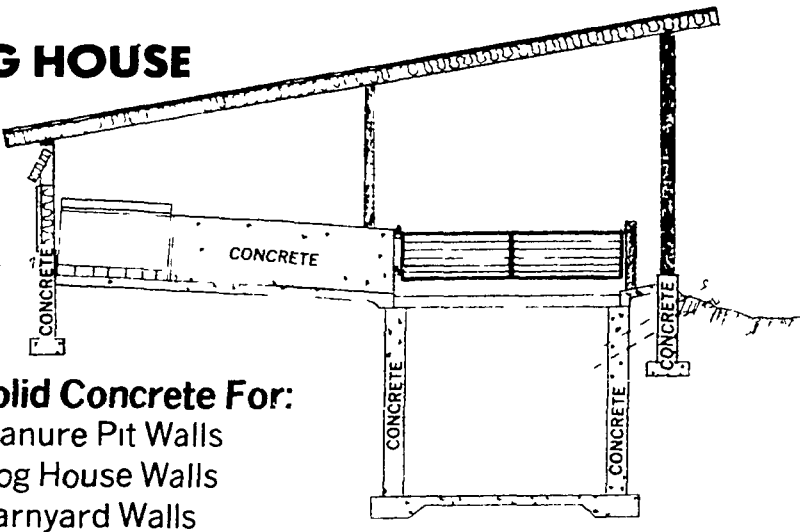
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