

# Sacramento Press

## **HOT ITALIAN makes its mark on Sacramento** **by Jonathan Mendick, published on March 21, 2009**

Shake shake shake. Pffft. Pffft. One thin coat at a time, a spray of paint creates a bright new decoration over the gray brick wall. An artist with a rubber mask stands on a ladder while his suitcase full of aerosol cans waits below.

He steps off and away from the ladder, looks at the black-and-white photograph in his hand and tilts his eyes upward to view the entirety of his 10-foot-tall mural. Pffft. Pffft. He continues to touch up the wall with black and white paint, the words "PERONI ITALY" nicely stenciled in the top right corner.



Anthony Padilla holds a day job as a graphic designer, but for the last 10 years he has been expressing himself by doing graffiti art and murals during nights. Today he is creating a comic book and graffiti-inspired urban work of art for Hot Italian, a pizza restaurant and Italian culture boutique on the corner 16th and Q Street.

Graffiti artists might usually only have a few moments under the cloak of nightfall to illegally tag up a wall before being chased away by police or business owners, their cursory artistic expressions quickly re-coated in another sheet of paint.

But Padilla is very lucky, not just because he has had hours to work on this particular mural over the last week, but because he is being commissioned to spray here, his creation to be viewed by many over the years to come.

"Mike Villareal helped me get this painting gig, and he is helping me with it along with the support of Andrea Lepore [Hot Italian owner], and Doug Woodward [of DBI Beverages which distributes Peroni to the Hot Italian]," Padilla said.

Lepore, who managed many of Hot Italian's aesthetic details, chose the photograph from a catalog of Peroni advertisements. "Other cities have urban murals, and we knew we wanted to serve Peroni, because it's a very modern Italian beer."



Lepore also plans to have a 20-foot laminate decoration incorporated onto the building's exterior depicting a couple on a scooter. Located on the 16th Street side of the building, it will be done by Italian company ABET Laminati.

Though Padilla usually uses color, today he has over forty cans of black and white paints in his suitcase to compliment the restaurant's modern Italian design. When he's done, he would love to work on a few more projects in the city.

One, he says, would incorporate the beauty of sculpture into the installation of solar panels. "Thinking about new ideas for energy sources is beautiful, so you should have a beautiful piece of art to complement it. Art that is functional and aesthetically pleasing would fit well in this city," said Padilla.

He would also like Sacramento to catch up with other modern cities by creating and maintaining legal walls for graffiti artists to paint on, uncensored. "If they had more of an outlet, there would be a better chance of them learning how to create something, rather than being chased away," he added.