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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

## At 75, neighborhood barbershop still makes the cut

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

Fast Eddie's Barber Shop owner Richard Lamoretti (front) and Eduard Achildiyer hope to keep the 75-year-old family-owned business going strong for at least 25 years more. Behind Achildiyer is one of the Halloween masks the shop also sells.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

What's the secret to keeping a small, family-run business running strong for three quarters of a century?

Apparently, part of the success comes from knowing how to keep that very secret.

"It's the work," explained local barbershop owner Richard Lamoretti, before pausing and smiling. "I know what else, but I don't want to say."

In the depths of the Great Depression, Lamoretti's grandfather, Edward Marotta, bought a small salon at the corner of Harvard and Glenville avenues in Allston after working there for nearly 15 years. The previous owner, Marotta's brother-in-law, left the salon to move into the tobacco-selling business, and he also provided Marotta a small loan to help keep his old shop

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afloat. In October 1935, the space began operating under the name "Edward's."

Next month, the hair-cutting locale now known as [Fast Eddie's Barber Shop](#) will celebrate 75 steady years of business.

Even during the recently rough economic climate, "If anything, I think my business has grown" said Lamoretti, a 40-year-old Somerville native who lives in Arlington.

The location is prime: a heavily traveled street about 500 feet from Brighton Avenue and a football field away from Commonwealth Avenue (and its popular Harvard Ave. T stop). It has bright red-white-and-blue themed exterior including the classic, spinning [barber's pole](#). But, what makes the barbershop stand out is the view from the street.

Lamoretti said most people remember the shop for, and describe it by, its large front windows and a floor that sinks several steps below the sidewalk entrance.

Another memorable feature is the array of Halloween costumes that line the walls.

The shop has sold wigs and toupees since the 1940s, which inspired Lamoretti to expand his business offerings eight years ago.

"People come and buy wigs, so I figured why not costumes," he said. "And it's been growing ever since."

The costumes were once a Halloween-season-only treat, but Lamoretti now just leaves them displayed year round. This fall, he has extra room for the [Allston Costume](#) business in an adjacent retail space next door, which he has rented out for two months and may consider keeping long term.

The shop has had as many as five employees at once, including Lamoretti's now-deceased mother, Patricia, and aunt, Denise. However, for the past 15 years, there have been just two: Lamoretti who has worked there for 20 years, and 38-year-old Eduard Achildiyyer, a native of Uzbekistan who lives in Canton and has worked at the shop for nearly all of his 18 years in the United States.

"It gets better and better," Achildiyyer said of the barbershop's business. "We give good haircuts, and this is a good job."

The two barbers said they have managed the steady stream of walk-in customers with ease, thanks in part to their expertise, good friendship, and respect for one another as co-workers.

"We're easy going people, very down-to-Earth," Lamoretti said.

For Lamoretti, keeping the shop open has been about honoring the memory of his grandfather, who worked there for 63 years, until he died at age 97, and about providing for his 3-month-old son, Richard Lamoretti III, and fiancée Nicole Moccio.

But it also has also kept him from heading down the bad path he was on in his teen and young-adult years, when drugs and drinking affected his life.

"This keeps me focused. It helps me stay out of trouble," he said, adding that he has been sober for 10 years. "I can wait to get here every morning."

And, his dream is to see the shop continue strong for another 25 years.

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"We're definitely doing 100 years, no matter what," he said, looking at Achildiyer whom he often refers to as "boss."

The majority of Fast Eddie's customers are men, and arrive without an appointment. Lamoretti estimated 90 percent of them return.

"We have customers from all over the country," Lamoretti said, listing regulars who live in suburbs nearly one hour outside of the city and former regulars who have since moved out of Massachusetts but stop in when they happen to return to the city.

"It makes you feel good," Lamoretti said.

*To commemorate the 75th anniversary, Fast Eddie's Barber Shop will offer haircuts – normally priced at \$12 and up – for a flat fee of \$7.50 on Sunday, Oct. 10.*

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

Fast Eddie's at 179 Harvard Ave. turns 75 this October and will commemorate it's 1935 opening with discount haircuts on Oct. 10.

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