

# 'Artist's' work is cast in stone all over the city

Immigrant mason takes pains to make it right

By Carol A. Leonetti  
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**NEW HAVEN** — Giuseppe Capasso is an artist whose brush is his trowel, whose canvas is stones. His name is not known in city artistic circles, but his work has been seen by thousands.

His gallery is citywide — the lighthouse at Lighthouse Point Park, the wall surrounding Edgerton Park, Yale Divinity School, and St. Mary's Church. Outside the city, the cupolas of Hamden and East Haven high schools exhibit his touch.

Capasso, 37, is a mason who has repaired or restored these and other landmarks as if they were precious works of art. Those who

have studied his work say it is painstakingly accurate. Capasso, who initials his work after he finishes a job, said it is the only way he knows to perform.

Capasso learned masonry in his native Messacola, Italy. He started as an 11-year-old sweeping up after his uncle and brother-in-law. By 15, he was a full-fledged mason earning the equivalent of \$2 a day.

But when he came to the United States that year with his family, he wasn't old enough to work. So he went to school for a year, then worked nights at the former Cott Soda Co. At 18, he started with Blakeslee Arpaia & Chapman Inc.,

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Giuseppe Capasso works on a chimney on Fountain Street.

## Stonemason: He once sculpted pizza crust

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then worked with F.J. Dahill Co. Inc.

He briefly left the mason business to make pizza after his wife's father was killed during a robbery at Tolli's Apizza Restaurant. He made pizza in the family business at night, then subcontracted for others during the day.

"It got to a point where he never saw the children," said Louisa, Capasso's wife and a partner in G & L Capasso Inc. "He was a little apprehensive at first, but he finally decided to go out on his own."

The decision has paid off handsomely. Louisa Capasso, who keeps the company's books and runs the office, said that offers are

many but jobs accepted are few.

"He does every job like it was his own home," she said. Capasso refused to restore the cupola of a local high school because he didn't like the job specifications. He said he doesn't want to expand because he prefers to do every job himself.

"If I don't like the quality, I can't sleep at night," said Capasso, who speaks limited English.

People familiar with Capasso's work said it speaks for itself.

Maximilian Ferro of the Preservation Partnership, who inspected the wall at Edgerton Park for the state after Capasso finished restoring a portion of it, called Capasso's work "exceptional quality at a most favorable price . . . (it) should be the standard to which all future work must be held."