David Reyes was born in Mexico City, Federal District. He grew up in a small town called San Juan, Teotihuacan near the State of Mexico. One of the most visited tourist towns in Mexico; an archaeological site that is well known for its ancient pyramids which brings people from all over the world. His father had a restaurant of his own, where he spent most of his childhood. He practically lived there, he did everything there from homework to throwing family parties, to hanging out with friends and playing in the back of the restaurant. He started working at a very young age, helping out in his father’s restaurant which gave him a lot of experience and later on would have a restaurant of his own. While in school he learned English which was a big boost of help in his dad restaurant not only that but in the community. While growing up he was introduced to be self-sufficient in getting his own things and he learned not to take things for granted. Giving solution to his own problems. David decided to serve Mexican food in his restaurant because they were told by their friends that the Americans loved Mexican food. They also noticed that restaurants mostly served Tex-Mex food and not authentic Mexican food. So they saw the chance of showing everyone what real Mexican food was. They wanted to bring a part of Mexico to Houston, Texas. Note that this was 11 years ago. Today, there is a more restaurants serving authentic Mexican food and that’s a good thing. He notes that in 2010 UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) honored the Mexican food as number one in the world. So this boosted him and others into preserving the Mexican foods and its culture. Mexico has a lot of history in their foods, their roots run deep. He explains how their foods are well balanced and nutritious. He also comments on how there’s a lot of myths about Mexican foods on how it is very fattening or greasy and non-healthy. Which is not true, Mexican food is very nutritive. David Reyes wants his customers to leave his restaurant astonished by their quality and delicious meals. He would love to have returning customers and better yet for them to bring more people to the restaurant. He loves what he does therefore, he won't be retiring any time soon not until he achieves his goal. Which includes opening a bigger restaurant in a different area and he wants the city of Houston to appreciate the real Mexican foods.
Since, David studied business administration he would like to invest later on and keep himself active while helping others. He decided to open the restaurant 13 years ago, he first opened up his restaurant in the Northside area of Houston but due to the lack of business he felt the urge to relocate his restaurant. It is very established in the area and community and has returning and new customers. The clients are the ones who helped this restaurant running because they would come in and leave very astonished by the real and authentic foods that they never tried or remembered when they were in Mexico. Most of the clients recommend Fonda Santa Rosa and they often bring their whole families so they can try the amazing dishes. Before opening his own restaurant, David worked in his uncle's tamaleria (tamale restaurant). What took him to take action to open a restaurant was when his mother passed away in 2004, leaving behind a recently opened a restaurant nearby that had all the things that were needed, like the team and the equipment. This resulted in him leaving his uncle's side, to take over his mom's restaurant. David and his mother shared the same desired of owning a restaurant so he decided to alter and fix it to keep its continuation. He chose the name Fonda Santa Rosa for his restaurant because in Mexico "Fonda" means small restaurants that serve homemade, traditional food which is all natural and nutritive and have recipes that were passed down in the families. Also, "Santa Rosa" was because in Puebla there is a convention called Santa Rosa were most of the Mexican kitchen was born. The Mexican kitchen was a creation that was fused in by the Spanish kitchen in the 1500’s. At that time different tribes and indigenousness people mixed the foods of the Spaniards which resulted in today’s Mexican plates. “Santa Rosa is a very good example of the Mexican food because of its nutritious food and color in the foods almost like art,” David Reyes. David decided to open up his own restaurant as a tribute to his mother and for himself. One day he grabbed his belongings and brought his family to the United States. However, building and managing a business was no easy task. The hardest part of putting the restaurant up was publicizing it due to the lack of funds. David and his family invested all of their money and savings into the business leaving them with low profit for the first two years. They literally built the restaurant with their own hands, they did the plumbing work, placed the sheetrock which is drywall panels, installed the ceramic tile floor, and built the interior with the help of his uncle who was a construction worker. Including the interior designs, they painted the restaurant and added a few of their personal touches of art in the walls. Many frames of paintings, ornaments, and pictures came originally from Mexico. Their goal was to create a very Mexican authentic restaurant. For their inauguration they only invited close friends since they only had six tables. They felt very triumphant because the restaurant was crowded. Gratefully, after those two years business got better. Today, Fonda Santa Rosa has 11 tables they have many regulars and many clients are always recommending their authentic dishes.

Authors: Jessica Frausto and Jesus Carillo

Source: Fonda Santa Rosa Mexican Cuisine Personal Interview, October 28, 2015, Houston, Texas.