In November 2005 someone using e-Bay offered for sale a matchbook cover for The Sorrento Restaurant—Italian and American Food. Printed on it were the names of F. Pecora and P. Gounod.

The first indication in the Harlingen telephone directory of either of these two surnames occurs in 1952 when Gounod's Apparel and Bridal Salon at 312 E. Jackson appears with Mrs. Rose L. Gounod as proprietor.

It is in the 1956 directory that one finds Sorrento Restaurant Frank Pecora, Pete Gounod, co-owners, Italian and American Food, 1 ¾ mi W St Hwy 83. This appears to indicate that this business was Harlingen's first restaurant offering a wide range of Italian food items on its menu. Craig Grover of Harlingen possesses a rare advertising post card dating back to about 1952. It shows the Sorrento Restaurant of F. Pecora and P. Gounod surrounded by 1940s and 1950s cars. It is a modest white frame building with a porch overhang. On the reverse of the card is printed THE SORRENTO RESTAURANT FIRST and FINEST ITALIAN and AMERICAN FOOD WHERE FRIENDS MEET SEVEN KINDS OF ITALIAN "PIZZA" (PIE) 6:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. NICK TRIMARK, MGR. (Nick was a former major league baseball player). Under this is printed HACIENDA MOTEL - 60 Modern Cabins – Swimming Pool and Shuffle Board of Course.

In all the subsequent years until the restaurant closed by 1982 there is never any Harlingen residential listing for Frank or any other Pecora. He may have lived in the second story of the next Sorrento location.

The 1956-57 directory calls the business "Sorrento Cafè" and puts its address at 2 ½ mi 83. The addresses vary somewhat from year to year depending where Business 83 was said to start. Generally its beginning is put at the intersections of Harrison and Tyler Streets with Expressway 77.

For whatever reason the restaurant is not listed anywhere in the 1958, 1959, nor 1959-60 directories. Possibly because of its rural site it was omitted.

The building which houses the restaurant is an historic one. Initially likely a large white-painted stucco two story, it was constructed in 1923 for Hesta Stuart Christian, a daughter of Champ Terry Stuart and sister of Robert Terry Stuart, the principle in the development of the Stuart Tract. She married Woods Christian in 1923. The property extended all the way south to the arroyo and was mostly brush. Cattle were run on it.

Some time after the Gounods acquire the frontage building they paint it pink to give it a Mediterranean flavor. This ambiance is added to when, over the years, vines are allowed to spread over most of the exterior. Upstairs rooms are reserved for private parties.

In 1959 Pete and Rose Gounod give Hwy 83 and Palm Blvd. as their home address. They live across the road from the restaurant.

Sorrento The Restaurant Pete Gounod, Virginia Pecora, and Tina Florio, partners is the listing in the 1961 and 1962 directories. Its address is 2 mi W St Hwy. Tina is Pete's sister. The 1965 listing has changed to Sorrento Restaurant, Tina Florio and Peter Gounod, partners.
1966 finds it The Sorrento under the regular listings but not in the separate paid business advertising section for restaurants. In the 1969 listing The Sorrento is again an entry in both sections. Some time around 1973-74 Lucy Johnson is to buy the business from the Gounonds. It continues to be listed through 1979 then is gone from the directory listing. In 1980 neither the restaurant not Mrs. Gounod's Shop are listed. Even her home listing ceases after 1981. In its latter years her bridal/dress shop was somewhat gloomy and rundown with outdated stock. In the 1960s and 70s the Italian fare was delicious and Sorrento was one of the few places in the area that a pizza could be obtained. This was, of course, before the numerous chain pizza restaurants become ubiquitous and competitive. The pizza was excellent, perhaps in part, because it was prepared in an authentic brick oven located in the false basement of the building. The service at Sorrento was notoriously slow in this period. Customers will recall the two elderly women, likely Rose and Tina, who presided as maitre d'. Pete was kind-hearted but somewhat eccentric in insisting customers imbibe wine prior to and during the consumption of the Italian dishes. This even extended on occasion to serving minors a small glass of vino. The year 1981 finds it re-opened by new owner Buck Hunter as Sorrento's Vineyard Restaurant, however it is no more by 1982. He could not make a go of it. In 1983 the building's new owners are Don and Barbara Waters and her brother Joel Brown. The latter, a Texan A&I grad in business, has had by this time experience at the King's Inn south of Kingsville and 13 years with his then father-in-law, Phil Edie, at the famed Highway Inn at Four Corners. They initiate a remarkable transformation on the time-worn structure. Abetted by the 1983 freeze which killed all the vine vegetation, though they still labored mightily to remove clinging tendril, they painted the exterior a sandy beige color thereby providing the structure a southwest appearance. Room spaces are opened up to facilitate traffic flow and provide an airier atmosphere to the facility. Private party rooms are added as well as spacious parking lots both front and rear. The latter necessitated the purchase of additional property. The original entrance and parking lot on the Palm Blvd. side are expanded into a patio-like private dining room. Italian fare is no more as the new owners change the name to The Lone Star Restaurant and Lounge featuring "American" food. Starting slowly the hand printed menu offers barbecue and chicken fried steak and then expands into a complete menu. Upon retirement the Waters and partner Brown sell the business to the Waters' son and daughter-in-law, Brent and Stephanie Waters, and their married daughter and son-in-law Terra and Jerry Hoff. Still later the latter two buy out their partners. The restaurant remains popular for its diverse cuisine ranging from Tex-Mex to steaks, barbecues, 1015 onion loaves, and what you will. The building itself is a recycling success story, but old timers still relish the memories and tastes of Harlingen's first Italian eatery and the straw-covered bottles of chianti wine creating a glow before the food was finally served.