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Lifestyle

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Scoring With Lombardi Play

Plainfield native Tony Ponturo commissioned and co-produced Lombardi, Broadway's smash hit six-character play based on a biography of football legend Vince Lombardi.

Posted December 13, 2010 by [Mary Ann Castronovo Fusco](#)

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Dan Lauria stars as Vince Lombardi in this six-character play commissioned and co-produced by Plainfield native Tony Ponturo, below. Courtesy of Public Relations.

He first coached at St. Cecilia's High School in Englewood, married a Jersey girl and finally rested in Middletown's Mount Olivet Cemetery. Now Vince Lombardi—who led the Green Bay Packers to back-to-back Super Bowl victories—is playing on Broadway, thanks to Plainfield native Tony Ponturo.

Dismayed that generations know little of the gridiron genius for whom the Super Bowl trophy is named, Ponturo, 58, commissioned and co-produced *Lombardi*, a six-character play based on David Maraniss's biography, *When Pride Still Mattered*. Starring Dan Lauria (*The Wonder Years*) as Lombardi and Trenton native Judith Light (*Who's the Boss?*) as his wife, Marie, the play opened in October at Circle in the Square theater.

A middle linebacker for the Bayley-Ellard High School Bishops in Madison when Lombardi's Packers dominated the NFL, Ponturo earned an economics degree at Villanova but was most passionate about sports and entertainment. He took his "unofficial master's"—18 months of making 150 bucks a week" as an NBC page before tackling advertising and working his way up to vice president of global media, sports and entertainment marketing for Anheuser-Busch.



Courtesy of Public Relations.

He left the beer giant in 2008—the same year *Businessweek* ranked him 14th on its list of the 100 most influential people in sports—and started Ponturo Management Group in New York City, producing a pair of Tony winners: the revival of *Hair and Memphis* (written by Oradell native Joe DiPietro, with score and lyrics by Jersey boy David Bryan of Bon Jovi). Ponturo's clout—he received a

Lifetime Innovator Award at the inaugural Sports Media Marketing Awards in November—helped him win the NFL's permission to use its trademark for *Lombardi* and has attracted some big sports names come curtain time.

"You have to believe in yourself, and it'll work out," Ponturo says. *Lombardi*, no doubt, would agree.

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Rosie has the latest news on NJ restaurants openings and closings.

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Savoring the Moment

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2011/01/14

It is the goldmine of advertisements—a publicity jackpot, if you will. Lady O (the media maven, not FLOTUS) puts her stamp of approval on something and sales skyrocket. That is exactly what happened to the small kitchen product company Prepara. The company's Herb Savor, a simple device that helps preserve the life of fresh herbs for up to three weeks, was included on the 2010 list of Oprah's Favorite Things.

By [Candace Wells](#)

Two Birds

[NJ My Way](#)

2011/02/25

It is almost March and my young son wants to build a house for the two bluebirds that will soon return. We see them every year in the spring, flitting among the trees, deciding where to nest, and complaining loudly about the mercurial weather. It can't be easy returning to New Jersey after spending a winter in Daytona.

Stuffed

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2011/02/24

By [Eric Levin](#)

Getting Ready to 'Get Fit'

[Lost in the Suburbs](#)

2010/01/04

Starting this afternoon, I will be taking part in Get Fit New Jersey, a rigorous, 24-week fitness program at Life Time Athletic in Florham Park. Naturally, I spent the weekend stuffing my face with as much holiday chocolate and other goodies as possible.

By [Ken Schlager](#)

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