

At last! Authentic pizza for the Neapolitan in all of us

BY PAM GRANT, TIMES COLONIST JULY 14, 2009



Pizzas are best when the freshest ingredients are used.

Photograph by: Files, Times Colonist

Earlier this year, I heard that a pizza place would be opening in the Cook Street Village. I remember thinking, "If only someone could open a place that makes real pizza." Well, someone finally did.

We have all kinds of pizza in Victoria, but nothing I have eaten in a restaurant here comes close to the pizza I really love, with thin but chewy crust with a modicum of toppings. Until now that is. When Geoffrey Dallas and wife Christen DeCarolis-Dallas moved here from California, they saw the gap and filled it.

Don't expect checkered tablecloths or bottles of Chianti. Pizzeria Prima Strada is a bare-bones room with seating for about 60 people, dominated by an open kitchen with a wood-fired oven that reaches temperatures in excess of 800 degrees and cooks a pizza in about three minutes. Do expect to see a lineup to be seated (reservations are only accepted for large groups), and a lot of people coming in for takeout.

Why? Because this is the real deal, not the deep-dish ensembles with 26 ingredients or crusts filled with fake cheese that are the stuff of nightmares. The menu is simple, with a couple of appetizers, a few salads and several pizzas, made in the Neapolitan tradition.

If you go to Naples you won't find pizza with chicken, barbecue sauce and pineapple. Pies have a thin crust, and are topped with a swirl of San Marzano tomatoes, grown on the volcanic plains south of Mount Vesuvius and a few other ingredients such as basil, oregano, anchovies, garlic, extra virgin olive