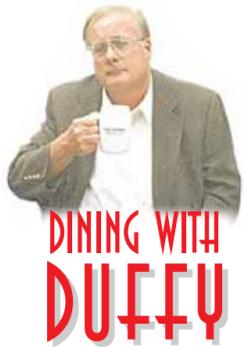


ACCENT

www.thejournalnet.com



Vito's Pizza and Pasta

Address: 74 W. New York St., Indianapolis

Phone: 916-9010

Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, closed Sunday

Credit cards: Major cards accepted

Entrée price range: \$2.50 to \$15

Authentic Italian pizza has taste of New York

Vito's Pizza & Pasta is your quintessential New York pizzeria coincidentally situated on New York Street in downtown Indianapolis.

Owner Vito Ruggieri is your quintessential New Yorker: Born in Brooklyn and raised in Italy, he moved back to Brooklyn and then to the Midwest to spread the joy of pizza.

Ruggieri opened in mid-December with an operation similar to the one he launched with two partners in Zionsville in 2004 under the name of Amore Pizzeria.

His approach is to have a wide assortment of pizzas fresh from the oven on display and available by the slice, along with an array of baked calzones and pasta dishes.

Once ordered, the pizza slices and calzones are given a quick reheat for ultimate dining warmth.

The pizza slices are massive, roughly a quarter of a normal large pizza.

"The Deluxe" (\$3.10) lays on sausage, pepperoni, ham, onions, mushrooms and green peppers.

The New York-style pizza is thin crust, made by whirling it in the air to achieve its moon-inspired circumference. The crust contributes impressively to the overall flavor of Vito's pizzas.

Providing stiff competition to the pizzas is Ruggieri's repertoire of eight baked calzones, with the crust liberally crammed with choices of ham and cheese, spinach blends, chicken, steak and cheese, sausage and cheese in the stromboli mode and even eggplant.

I checked out the signature calzone well endowed with Italian sausage, green peppers and onion (\$4.99). The tasty and satisfying calzone features superb sausage and a baked crust in splendid form.

I would not suggest consuming the calzone in the same sitting with a Vito's pizza slice, since it could come across to your fellow diners that you are in the middle of a playoff eating contest.

Many of my fellow patrons during this busy noontime nourishment session threw themselves into Vito's surprisingly extensive quick-serve pasta offerings.

They include spaghetti and meatballs or sausage; lasagna; baked ziti; fettuccine Alfredo, with optional chicken or shrimp; linguini with white or red clam sauce; and meat or cheese ravioli.

The salads also are considered most inviting, notably the antipasto salad festooned with Italian deli meats and cheeses.

The Italian accent also applies to such desserts as cannoli, tiramisu, lemon and orange ice and the Italian truffle, *tartufo*.

All of this New York Italiano culinary authenticity makes for a most comforting lunch at Vito's Pizza & Pasta that's easy on the wallet or purse.

Although the prospect of a productive afternoon from the diners returning to nearby office buildings might be problematic, Vito's does have 16- and 18-inch pizzas the entire company can share.

Veteran restaurant critic Reid Duffy writes a weekly review for the Daily Journal. Comments may be sent to letters@thejournalnet.com.

Stave off Super Bowl boredom

By ANNETTE JONES

DAILY JOURNAL FEATURES EDITOR
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Food is a focus of any Super Bowl party, but surprises can keep the gathering lively even if the game lags.

The secret to a successful Super Bowl party in central Indiana this year, besides a big-screen television, is keeping the minds of guests off the absence of the Colts.

Party hosts who had to ditch their blue-and-white themes can find ways to generate excitement for Sunday's match between the Pittsburgh Steelers and Seattle Seahawks.

The element of surprise throughout the party will keep up interest in the game, not just in the commercials, says Josh Berger, director of dining services at Franklin College who plans campus festivities and gatherings.

Berger suggests making a game out of tracking Super Bowl statistics. Try two contests during each quarter.

Have guests pick things like total game points, final score, total penalties, which team gets the most penalties, number of yards teams lose in penalties, number of yards gained from penalties, total touchdowns, number of field goals, yards gained per quarter or most valuable player.

The winner of each contest gets a prize. Good choices are lottery tickets, movie passes, team apparel, gift certificates, gourmet cheese, fine wine and beer or chocolates.

Make sure guests know there will be a grand prize.

"It helps keep your guests focused on the game even if they aren't interested," Berger says.

Then keep the surprises coming in the form of food.

Serve different provisions at each stage of the game. The tendency is to have all salty snacks, so mix in some nonsalty foods, he says.

Keep Sunday's football fans guessing with mix of party food, games

Start with munchies such as Chex mix or chips, followed by raisins or fruit to clear the palette.

At halftime, bring out the heavier fare, such as barbeque or roast beef sandwiches or chili.

Serve the main dish in a slow cooker so it stays hot. Have plenty of grainy bread and buns handy for sandwiches. If serving chili or other soups, provide garnishes like grated Cheddar cheese, sour cream and chopped onion, plus crackers and crusty bread.

During the third quarter, bring out a big bowl of popcorn glazed with melted caramel and cheeses and chips.

Serve sherbet or fresh fruit to clear the palette, and then offer finger desserts such as chocolate-covered pretzels or dried pineapple.

For beverages, Berger suggests going beyond beer, wine and liquor by adding some low-alcohol drinks like wine coolers or hard lemonade.

A simpler alternative to cocktails is a punch made with fruit juice, ginger ale, sherbet and rum or vodka.

To decorate for the party, use a colorful tablecloth and napkins and team posters. (Store the blue and white decorations you bought before the playoffs until next year. The Colts will be back.)

For a sure-to-please soup recipe, try Chili for a Crowd from "The Silver Palate Cookbook."



(A contest) helps keep your guests focused on the game even if they aren't interested."

Josh Berger, Franklin College dining services director

Chili for a Crowd

½ cup best-quality olive oil
1¼ pounds yellow onions, coarsely chopped
2 pounds sweet Italian sausage meat, removed from casings
8 pounds beef chuck, ground
1½ tablespoons freshly ground black pepper
2 12-ounce cans tomato paste
3 tablespoons minced fresh garlic
½ heaping cup ground cumin seed
½ cup plain chili powder
½ cup prepared Dijon-style mustard
4 tablespoons dried basil
4 tablespoons dried oregano
6 pounds (about five cans) Italian plum tomatoes, drained
½ cup Burgundy wine
¼ cup lemon juice
½ cup chopped fresh dill
½ cup chopped Italian parsley
3 16-ounce cans dark red kidney beans, drained
4 5½-ounce cans pitted black olives, drained
Salt to taste
Heat olive oil in a very large soup pot. Add onions and cook over low heat, covered, until tender and translucent, about 10 minutes.
Crumble sausage and ground chuck into the pot and cook over medium-high heat, stirring often, until meats are well browned. Drain fat and return meat to pot.
Over low heat, stir in black pepper, tomato paste, garlic, cumin seed, chili powder, mustard, salt, basil and oregano.
Add drained tomatoes, Burgundy, lemon juice, dill, parsley and drained kidney beans. Stir well. Heat chili to a simmer. Then cook uncovered for 15 minutes.
Taste and correct seasoning. Add olives, simmer for another 5 minutes or until heated through and serve.
Servings: 35 to 40

Serve chili in a slow cooker to keep it warm during a party.
CLIPART.COM PHOTO



Wine-bottle size matters for keeping vintages prime longer

Most wineries, especially European, produce wine in large bottles.

The popularity of large bottles in the United States is low, however, and the reasons why are somewhat obscure.

A primary reason is the negative societal and governmental attitudes toward alcohol.

Most of us in Americans don't approach wine with the same ceremonial and celebratory mindset as people from many other countries do.

That aside, big bottles of wine are useful for several reasons.

You might have seen them adorning shelves of finer restaurants.

These are not only for décor



Charles R. Thomas

ON THE BARRELHEAD

but also to be available if a large party orders wine with their meal.

Large bottles delay the maturation and aging of fine wines.

Wine will age about 50 percent to 75 percent more slowly for every step up in bottle size.

Therefore, if you find an espe-

cially great wine and worry about it aging until it loses its flavor, buy the wine in larger bottles. You can expect it to retain its charm two to four times longer.

This is valuable for wines with a relatively short life expectancy, such as sparkling varieties. With a few exceptions, sparkling wines are never better than when they are released for sale.

But if you buy some in magnum (two bottles in one) or jeroboam (four bottles in one) sizes, you can have tasty Champagne for several years to come.

There are some negatives to large bottles, though.

They become quite expensive as they increase in volume. They

also are difficult to store on standard racks and are sometimes quite heavy.

In addition, extracting the cork and pouring out of them is challenging.

Those things aside, however, large bottles are festive and beautiful.

After emptying, you can use them for decorating the mantle, for a penny bank, as a lamp or for a host of other clever uses.

The worldwide standard bottle is the 750 milliliter size. Smaller bottles are also made, especially for the convenience of single portion serving.

The smallest is the split (187 milliliters), used primarily on airlines, and the half-bottle (375

Get in valentine mood with food

Daily Journal staff report

Three upcoming events in central Indiana use food as inspiration for celebrating Valentine's Day.

• Indianapolis chef Wendell Fowler will prepare food for couples from 3 to 6 p.m. Friday at Nature's Cupboard, 8215 U.S. 31 South between Stop 11 and Stop 12 roads in Indianapolis.

Visitors can sample dishes, and Fowler will discuss foods that can inspire romance.

Fowler is a speaker, columnist and educator in the field of culinary healing arts who emphasizes healthy lifestyles. He has 12 years of experience catering with the NBA. Reservations are not required.

• A valentine candlelight cooking class with chef Daina Chammess will take place Feb. 11 at The Apple Works orchard, County Road 250 in Trafalgar.

Tasting of wines from Mallow Run Winery in the Greenwood area begins at 5:30 p.m. The cooking class starts at 6 p.m., followed by a sampling dinner.

The menu includes apple ruma-ki, bacon and cheese fingers, lovers' soup, valentine salad, apple-filled chicken breasts in pecan crème sauce, green bean bundles, rice pilaf and chocolate melba cheesecake.

Cost is \$28 per person. To make reservations by credit card, call 878-9317.

• The Whitewater Valley Railroad will host its annual "Rails to Romance" dinner excursion Feb. 11.

The train will depart from Grand Central Station in downtown Connersville at 5 p.m. Passengers will travel to Laurel, where dinner will be served at the Laurel Hotel Restaurant, a quaint countryside restaurant specializing in pan-fried chicken and other home-style meals.

Fare is \$30 for adults and \$15 for children. The fee includes round-trip train tickets and the meal, dessert, drink, tax and tip.

For driving directions visit www.whitewatervalleyrr.org/directions.php.

Prepaid reservations and meal selections are required by calling (765) 825-2054.

AROUND THE HOUSE

DIY Network

Q: What are some wall-color options for a room that has an orange-stained molding? I want to stay with warm earth tones.

A: Warm earth tones do work better with orange. Avoid using cool blues, mauves or gray.

Consider terra cotta, dark green or eggplant.

Q: Can I mix ceramic tiles with Mexican tiles on a bathroom countertop?

A: Yes, but be aware that Mexican tiles are usually thicker than ordinary ceramic tiles.

You may need to build up the base for the ceramic tiles to match the surfaces and grout-lines evenly.

Charles R. Thomas, a certified wine judge, is owner of Chateau Thomas winery based in Plainfield.