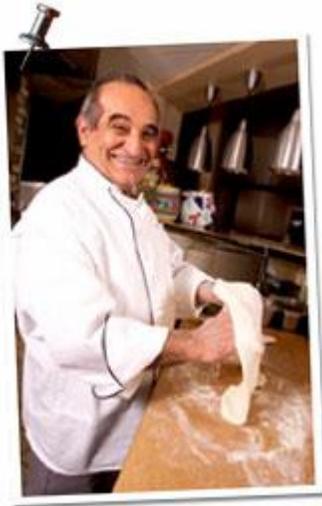


Writing Sample: Biography of Alfonso Carusone, Master Pizzaiolo Napolitano, for Sette Osteria web site.



Alfonso Carusone, Master Pizzaiolo Napolitano:

Recently arrived in the Nation's Capital to serve as the master pizzaiolo at Franco Nuschese's new Washington venture, Sette Osteria, just above DuPont Circle at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and R Street, Mr. Carusone sat down to talk a bit about himself, his philosophy about pizza making, and what makes a good one...

Destined to make pizza napoletana, Mr. Carusone was born in Naples, Italy during the late 1940's. As the third generation of his family in the business, he began working in his grandfather's osteria cum pizzeria at a young age along side his own father. His early exposure allowed him to learn the art of pizza making from master Neapolitan pizzaioli (pizza makers), much like many Italian masters

have from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance to the present day – learning by doing. His grandfather, himself a master pizzaiolo in the Neapolitan tradition, taught not just Mr. Carusone, but also his brothers and sisters, as he had his father before him.

Following his father to America in the early 1970's, Mr. Carusone refined his pizza making skills at Vesuvio, his father's pizzeria in Queens, New York. During his decade at Vesuvio, named in honor of Naples' famous volcano – the legendary home of the Roman god Vulcan, he brought the true traditions of Neapolitan pizza to the local scene. What are these traditions (or rules, if one is legalistic)? Pizza diameter must always be within 10 to 12 inches (approximately 30 centimeters). The dough is made from only durum wheat flour, natural or brewers' yeast, a little salt (to taste, not measured), and water. Fats are completely verboten. Dough must be mixed by hand. Also, the pizza is baked directly on the oven's floor, never on a sheet or other pan. These are only a few of the rules and traditions by which a true pizzaiolo lives. Many American pizzerias, particularly the chains, ignore these traditions, but Mr. Carusone, like his fellow pizzaioli, believe that these rules are required to produce true Italian pizzas.

Mr. Carusone's philosophy for making a great pizza is that you must make it "with your heart". You must "passionately" love the process. You must feel the care that went into the creation of the ingredients that make the pizza. He emphasized that he only used Italian ingredients, straight from Naples – real durum wheat (grano duro tenro), yeast, fresh tomatoes, herbs, meats like Neapolitan pepperoni and prosciutto, and cheeses like mozzarella, pecorino campano, grana, and provolone. He said that the dough must have to "correct dosage of flour – the right amount of the duro tenro".

After a decade at his family's pizzeria in Queens, Mr. Carusone ventured forth to Tony May's Hostaria in Port Chester, New York, where he spent about six years. From there he

moved to Mr. May's Gemelli (Italian for Twins) in New York City's former landmark, the World Trade Center. His tour there ended, as it did for many people, on September 11, 2001, when the towers fell. However, Mr. Carusone's career did not. After a few months' break, he became the master pizzaiolo Salvo Scalia's Savoia (Italian for Savoy, the former ruling house of Italy) in Brooklyn, New York, where he spent six months before moving to another Brooklyn pizzeria, Caserta Vecchia, in late 2002. After about a year at Caserta Vecchia, Franco Nuschese lured him to Washington to Sette Osteria.

He said that he came to Sette to ensure that it "adheres to the proper way of making pizza."

Mr. Carusone now lives in Washington with his wife and two children.