

S B L S

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NOT A CLOUD IN THE SKY



aspritz
on a *classic*

Photographed & Written by Silas Fallstich

I'm on a cleanse.

For no apparent reason I've been cleansing my refrigerator on the daily. I've been hungry in 2019, and not wake up and eat a lot hungry, but really hungry, like eat all day and go to bed thinking about food. When I walk in the doors of recently opened Bettina Pizzeria the first thing I see is the wood fire pizza oven and my appetite is stimulated even more. I take a seat at the bar and order a spritz. It's the end of a long rainy week, there are spotted clouds in the sky and a sunset is guaranteed. Instead of heading for the beach or another horizon vista, I order a Negroni and introduce myself to the art of double fisting. Something echoing a shadow of what Ernest Hemingway would do if offered the choice of sunset or bar bender, realistically he'd probably find a way to indulge in both.



BETTINA



Pepperoni pizza



flour,

hours.

MARGHERITA Mozzarella, crushed tomato, basil, olive oil

PEPPERONI Mozzarella, crushed tomato, chili oil, Holistic Ranch honey

RICOTTA Marinated kale, Calabrian chiles, shitake mushrooms, pecorino

SAUSAGE Provolone piccante, crushed tomato, winter greens, onions

FINGERLING POTATO Ricotta, radicchio, olive oil

CHANTERELLE Sottocenere truffle, cheese, mozzarella

SUNCHOKES Aged cheddar, scarole, torpedo onions

ROASTED CAULIFLOWER* Nduja, mozzarella, olive oil

KABOCHA SQUASH Ricotta, mozzarella, broccolini, garlic, olive oil

ROSSO Crushed tomato, garlic, olive oil, basil, olive oil

CHEESE PIZZA for kids

ADD ONS

1. Olives
Red onion
Side of ranch

2. Kale
Pepperoni
Kabocha squash

Sausage
Maitre d'hotel

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for two
olenta 32





The bar staff is outgoing and friendly, lingering often with regular customers while still taking their time treating everyone with equal attention and care. The white marble bar top is a piece of artwork, highlighted by chic light fixtures, open space, whitewashed walls, and green hues; the bright atmosphere is modern and inviting. Yet there's a homely feeling, a comfortable, welcoming sense that permeates the restaurant, there is not a fireplace but the space offers that same cozy vibe.

The first of several dishes that I try is the pepperoni pizza. Pepperoni is not my normal go-to pizza choice, but after seeing one delivered to another customer I couldn't resist. The server that delivers it to my bar seat offers a smile. I ask him what he thinks.

"So many pepperonis, that's what I love about it." His candid and straightforward response is incredibly precise.

Somebody call the pepperoni police, this isn't a pepperoni pizza this is an ode to pepperoni stacked on top of a pepperoni pizza. This is enough pepperoni for a small country. The pizza itself is cooked to wood-fired perfection. The Neapolitan rustic artisan crust is finished with a crisp, yet offers a delightful balance of tender, enjoyable dough.

With this pizza and these drinks I come to the quick conclusion that no racing is allowed at Bettina, slow down not only your dining but your overall experience. I could eat this pizza in two bites, I could



Negroni



BETTINA

APERITIVO

VENETIAN SP...
Contratto aper...
prosecco, soda w...

AMERICANO
Americano,
with, soda water 10

SPUNTINI

- Wood-fired bread & house made butter 5
- Marinated olives with lemon & thyme 6
- Chicken liver mousse with market pickles 10
- Mushroom crostini with mascarpone & parmesan 12

Salami, chamomile
pecorino, & gardineria

Burrata with swiss chard
hazelnut pesto

VERDURE

- Leafy greens
in sherry vinaigrette 14
- Baby gems with ranch,
pickled onion and goat cheddar 14

Our dough is nat...
and fer...

- MARGHERITA
- PEPPERONI Mozzarella
- RICOTTA Marinated
- SAUSAGE Provo
- FINGERLING P
- CHANTERELLE
- SUNCHOKE A
- ROASTED CAULI
- KABOCHA SQUASH R
- ROSSO C

Wood-fired bread



Winter squash arancini with Calabrian chile



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A Mozzarella
ella, crushed
kale, Calabrian
lone piccante, crus
OTATO Raclette, p
Sottocenere truffle ch
ged cheddar, escarole, torp
FLOWER* Nduja, mozzarella
icotta, mozzarella, broccolini, gar
crushed tomato, garlic, olive oil, basil,
CHEESE PIZZA for kids 10

ADD ONS
-2-
Kale
-3-
Anchovies
Sausage or pancetta
Maitake mushrooms
Natural disasters,



Burrata with swiss chard & hazelnut pesto



[“So many pepperonis, that’s what I love about it.”]

consume it in a wink, but instead I pick individual pepperonis off and make each slice an experience.

Take in the decor, find something unique about the space. Indulge in not one but two delectable cocktails before ordering dinner. After noticing the porthole to the kitchen, loaves of daily leavened bread, and the green-hued wallpaper, I begin to take in the other explicitly valuable nuances of the pizzeria. The music is modern, hip and upbeat, yet doesn’t overwhelm the space, it’s a mood setter and today the mood is

lively. I’m drawn to the plethora of books littered around the space and return to the bar with two picture cookbooks.

As I settle into my third cocktail and second slice of pizza I realize that the space has quickly become full of sociable customers. Families of four eating pizza after pizza. First date couples lingering close to one another over glasses of wine. Bar top buddies offering each other tastes of calamari, arancini, and burrata. There is an essence of community here, a feeling that few newly opened restaurants achieve.

The bartender stops by and asks if I have everything I need, I raise my glass and smile, not wanting words to give away my fading sobriety.

When I slow down and reflect on my experience at Bettina I quite quickly realize that their generosity with pepperoni is a metaphor for their business. I enjoyed every individual slice of pepperoni on my pizza, it could very easily be the best pepperoni I’ve ever tasted, and while I don’t know where it was sourced from or why it’s so generously dished out, I do greatly appreciate the simple, consumable nature of the artisan crafted pie. There is an honesty to the food and dining experience at this shop, an approachable menu with quality ingredients all pulled together with a homely sense of community.

A lot of businesses, restaurants, one-offs talk about community. Bettina Pizzeria is not in the business of talking about community, they’re active participants in not only our town but stimulating and generating their own community of diners, pizza aficionados, and bar top regulars. Their commitment to locally sourced ingredients, diligent staff, and the instantly recognizable attentiveness they give to each of their guests is a delightful addition to the Santa Barbara food scene.

★

Bettina
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Montecito
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Pepperoni pizza

