

## Prova for a Neapolitan Pizza with a Contemporary Twist.

M. T. (January 30, 2015)



Prova is the new pizza restaurant located in the heart of Chelsea. Ingredients you may never put on pizza like sea urchin, truffle, sheep ricotta and saffron and other various cheeses from Naples will captivate and intrigue your palate. Enjoying Neapolitan pizza with a contemporary twist.

Bring Neapolitan pizza to a different level. This is the provocation behind Prova. This new place will seduce you with different kind of pizza and with its modern style.

An ambitious collaboration between [Donatella Arpaia](#) [2], restaurateur/TV personality, Ribalta co-founder Rosario Procino and Maurizio de Rosa, a partner of [Sushi Nakazawa](#) [3].



This specific location is the only one in New York where [Stefano Ferrara](#) [4], the master oven-builder from Naples, built an oven from scratch. The place was going to be sold and most of the people who were purchasing the space had no interest in pizza. They got together a big team of people which sheds some kind of light on the space to try to save it and save the oven. The logic behind Prova is to use the dough as the base, as the canvas, so the artist can draw a wonderful masterpiece, displaying of some of the most traditional pizza and some of the most novelty, with all of these variant ingredients.

We have chatted about this project with true neapolitan Rosario Procino, Maurizio de Rosa and born and raised in Naples Chef Pasquale Cozzolino.

### **Why did you choose to open Prova pizzeria restaurant?**

We decided, along with Donatella and Maurizio, to build a new pizzeria and do something different, to elevate the pitch of pizza. Prova, which is Italian for “try” or “proof” is a kind of experiment. The idea is to really elevate the pitch when it comes to pizza. A few years ago, back in 2007 or 2008, there has been a huge explosion of Neapolitan pizza in New York.

I was one of the few that started the movement that has brought us to where Neapolitan pizza is known all over the country. The idea was, if you put crazy ingredients on pasta and other things, why can't you put them on pizza? Practically, we believe we have developed over the years a fantastic dough, where we work with very particular ingredients with a very long maturation process and only natural yeast to make a very light, delicate dough that is highly digestible.

The pizzeria will be a display of some of the most traditional pizza and some of the most novelty, with all of these variant ingredients.

### **Another interesting is the preparation of the dough.**

Over the years, we studied the different characteristics for how we could achieve the most digestible, most light, most delicate dough. A few of the things that will be different at Prova will be that we are going to use a mix of our own flour. We are going to get different kinds of flour, including a stone-mill flour from Italy and we are going to create our own mix. We are also going to use bottled water from Italy to make the dough. That adds quality to the dough itself. In terms of the mineral composition of the water, it will help achieve the goal for the final result of the dough. In order to achieve the best possible product, one of the other things we will be using at Prova is bottled water imported from Italy in preparing our dough.

### **You have decided to elevate the pizza from the ingredients, the atmosphere and obviously the wine.**

Prova will be the first Neapolitan pizzeria that wine is a big component of this project and we decided to be as close as we could to our tradition in the roots of where pizza comes from. There will be a very interesting wine list with wines sourced from the Campania Region. It's going to be a very small variety of grapes, all from different levels, different producers with a very tight relationship with the territory from the Naples region itself.

### **Maurizio, can you tell us about the selection of the wines?**

We made a very courageous choice: the wine list is going to be entirely wine from Campania. This region is not exactly the region that is most renowned for sparkling wine. We have Asprinio, which has been made since the 1500s. Another good one is [Feudi San Gregorio](#) [5] started in the early 2000s. It is a collaboration between the Feudi San Gregorio and Selosse – Selosse is a champagne house that is very prominent and famous. The idea was to use international champagne techniques to produce with native Italian wines. Very few people know that before World War II, beer was not very popular in Italy so the combination of pizza and beer did not really exist. When the American army finally settled in Naples, they began to bring their tradition of drinking beer and pizza but in ancient times, people used to drink Gragnano.

Gragnano, as people can guess, really takes its name from the town of Gragnano on the Sorrento peninsula. It's a sparkling red wine. I love this producer, Cantine Federiciane. The reason that Gragnano is really suitable for pizza is three things: first of all, it's a red wine, and as we know, pizza



can be quite bold, especially when it's topped with tomato and mozzarella. The second reason is the Piediroso grape that is the underlying grape for this wine has a very high acidity so it makes for a wine that is very refreshing. Then, this particular re-fermentation in large tanks makes for a wine that is quite brilliant, quite exuberant, quite vivacious. Pizza really needs something to pick it up because we are talking about grain and flour. I prefer these beverages with pizza rather than beer, which is the predominant tradition, both in Italy and in America today.

### **Pasquale which kind of ingredients you use to make a really unique pizza?**

I decided to create these new dishes but instead of the plates, the shell – the crust of the pizza. I decided to import everything from Italy – the best food on the market: slow food, micro production on Mount Vesuvius or little productions of cheese on small farms around Naples. These give us the opportunity to present a product to the customers that is a next-level pizza – a five-star pizza. My goal is to try to have a star, the best service, the best food, the best ingredients and the best people working.

We imported “pomodorini” tomatoes from Mount Vesuvius; they are called piennolo. They grow on Mount Vesuvius and there is a very small production. They are sewn and picked by hand. They are conserved for at least six months. The flavor is unbelievable. We have special pizzas, like sea urchin pizza, in which we use the best sea urchins from Maine. I think its one of the signature pizzas we have at this restaurant. We import the best squid to garnish the sea urchin. I'm trying to use the best buffalo cheese on the market. We have the Casatico, Quadrello Blu. All of the cheeses come from the small farms around Terra di Lavoro area. It's a little area between Lazio and Campania. We are trying to do something very special.

To do all of this, of course, I needed a team. My team is Giuseppe Manco, who is here with me always. He is the current world champion pizza maker in Las Vegas in 2014.

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- [3] <http://ny.eater.com/venue/sushi-nakazawa>
- [4] [http://www.artisanpizzasolutions.com/classic\\_neopolitan\\_pizza.html](http://www.artisanpizzasolutions.com/classic_neopolitan_pizza.html)
- [5] <http://www.palmbay.com/feudi-di-san-gregorio.htm>