

The Washington Post
Food

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2012

GOOD TO GO
Dulce's
Empanadas sell like hot cakes at this new Fairfax shop. **E3**



“ The pie emerges from the oven crisp of crust, bold with garlic and scattered with top neck clams that squirt hot juice. — Tom Sietsema's First Bite of Haven Pizzeria Napoletana. **E2**

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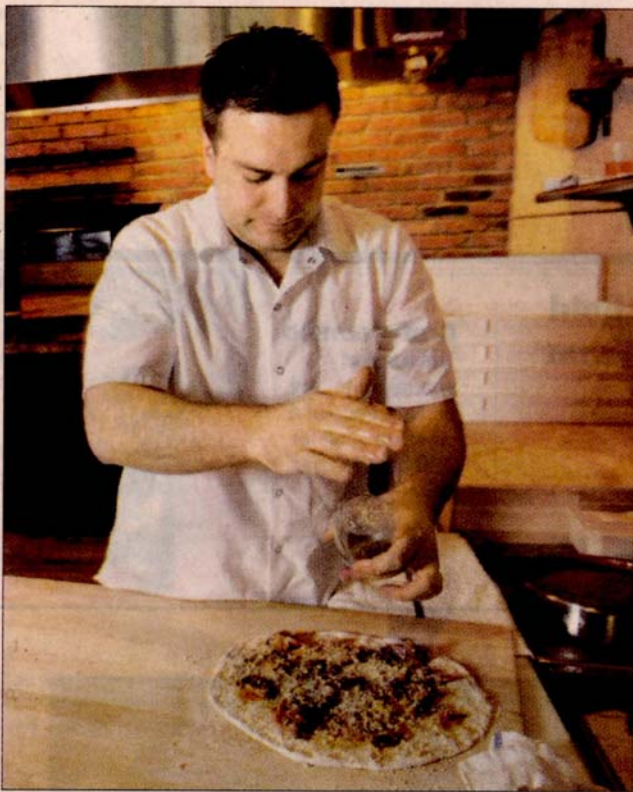
NOURISH
Crafty combo
The taste of spanakopita, the convenience of a crostata — all for 260 calories per serving. **E4**



MORE RECIPES Brown Butter Asparagus Risotto **E2** Spinach and Feta Crostata **E4**, PLUS MORE ONLINE AT WASHINGTONPOST.COM/RECIPES

E2 Restaurants

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PHOTOS BY BILL O'LEARY/THE WASHINGTON POST

Pizzaiole Mark Bergami, top, prepares a white clam pizza at Haven Pizzeria in Bethesda. Above, the wine bar features oak reclaimed from the Maker's Mark distillery in Kentucky.

*Come for the clam pie,
stay for the gelato*

Tom Sietsema

FIRST BITE

Like a lot of customers who have marveled over their meals at **Haven Pizzeria**

Napoletana in Bethesda, this admirer was curious to know the owners' source of inspiration.

Turns out there were many muses. Mark Bergami says he and his business partner, Tiger Mullen, kneaded bits and pieces of favorite pizza parlors (and even more-formal restaurants) into their creation. That explains Haven's two massive, coal-stoked ovens in the back of the dining room; a retro wine bar off to the side, paved with reclaimed oak from the Maker's Mark distillery in Loretto, Ky.; and gelato churned at the restaurant, from scratch, every day.

Bergami brings sterling credentials to the venue, which opened in February in a former rug store. The restaurateur is a native of New Haven, Conn., which enjoys a rich pizza culture. Before relocating to this market three years ago, Bergami also helped expand the legendary Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana there.

Long story short: Order a white clam pizza at Haven. The pie emerges from the oven crisp of crust, thoroughly cooked through, bold with garlic and scattered with top neck clams that squirt hot juice when you bite into them. Bergami says the seafood, from New Jersey and North

Carolina, is shucked "daily and continually." No dry or wizened clams here.

Almost as good is the basic tomato pie flavored with crushed imported plum tomatoes, pecorino cheese and olive oil: a handful of good toppings supported by a nicely grainy, pleasantly smoky crust.

The appetizers are straightforward, mostly salads. Red peppers roasted with mozzarella and fresh basil are still sizzling from their brush with fire when the first course lands on our broad wood table. The simplicity is intentional, Bergami says. Haven doesn't want you to fill up ahead of the signatures.

"Save room for the gelato," our sunny server advises at the start of the meal. Honestly, all I wanted after devouring that white clam pizza was another white clam pizza, but we did as we were told and got a couple scoops of Italian "ice cream." Suffice it to say, it took all my willpower not to make the dense pistachio gelato disappear.

Big chalkboards populate Haven's mozzarella-colored walls. One reads, "Work in progress." Such modesty is attractive. Young as it is, though, Haven already tastes like an authority on its subjects.

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7137 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda. 301-664-9412. havenpizzeria.com
Pizzas, \$7 (10-inch) to \$28 (16-inch).