

Highland Park

By Mira Tempkin

Bella Via

Check out Bella Via any summer night and you'll probably find diners sitting outside around umbrella tables on the street-side patio and the restaurant's backyard, enjoying a great evening out in Highland Park.

A full-service traditional Italian restaurant, Bella Via has been on Second Street for just over 16 years, serving Southern Italian chicken, veal, fish, eggplant and pasta dishes. Pizza Margherita is on the dinner menu as an appetizer, but most of Bella Via's pizza business comes from carryout and delivery.

Owner Maurizio LoBosco, who also serves as chef, said that everything that goes into his restaurant's pizzas is made from scratch. "We make the dough and the sauce, and all ingredients are fresh," he said. "We even grind our own sausage."



Maurizio LoBosco

Growing up in Italy, LoBosco especially enjoyed preparing and sharing meals with his family. "For Italians, cooking is a social event," he said. That sense of community he experienced as a child is one of the reasons he enjoys being a part of our town. "I love the whole area, the environment, and my wonderful downtown Highland Park location," he said.

Deep dish or thin crust? Crustless? Gluten-free or...
In Highland Park, the

Bella Via		
Address	1899 Second St.	49
Phone	847 681-8300	8
Website:	www.bellaviahighlandpark.com	www
Days/hours open:	Mon-Sat: 11:30a - 2:30p Sun-Thu: 4:30p - 9:30p Fri-Sat: 5:00p - 11:00p	Mon-Tue: Wed-Thu: Sat: Sun:
Owner/manager:	Maurizio LoBosco	Mike
In business how long?	16 years	50
Most popular pizza?	Pizza Margherita	Thin cru
Types of crust offered?	Thin, pan, and stuffed	Thin and
Unique toppings?	Bacon, pineapple, artichoke	Eggplant,
Gluten-free pizza?	No	Yes
Most popular non-pizza offering?	Southern Italian chicken, veal, fish, pasta	Homemade burgers, san
Busiest pizza day?	Super Bowl Sunday	Hallowe
Craziest request?	Seafood salad on a pizza	"A customer cau filetated it, and we his pizza.
Outdoor seating?		No
Catering?	Yes	Yes
Dine In or Carryout?	Yes	Both
Delivery offered?	Both	Yes
	Yes	Both
		Yes

Pizza:

Great Any Way You Slice It!

cheese or the whole works?
 or "gluten-y"?
 The pie's got no limit!

Il Forno's	Piero's	Ravinia BBQ & Grill
6 Old Elm Rd. 847-432-2440 www.ilfornopizza.com	737 Broadview 847-433-7795 www.pieropizza.com	592 Roger Williams Avenue 847-433-1111 www.raviniabbq.com
11:00a - 8:00p 11:00a - 9:00p 11:00a - 10:00p 11:00a - 9:00p	Mon/Wed/Thu: 2:30p - 9:00p Fri: 11:00a - 10:00p Sat: 2:30p - 10:00p Sun: 2:30p - 9:00p	Mon/Wed/Thu: 5:00p - 9:00p Fri/Sat: 5:00p - 10:00p Sun: 5:00p - 8:30p
Mike Rudolph	Owner Frank Guagliardo and Manager Marcus Holland	Closed Tuesday Bunnie Mesirov
30 years	30 plus years	30 years
Deep dish	Deep dish spinach	BBQ chicken
Thin, extra thin, pan, stuffed, and spessa (with a fluffy bread crust similar to focaccia bread)		Thin
Artichoke	Sun-dried tomatoes, Italian beef	Pesto sauce, buffalo sauce, bleu cheese
Lasagna, sandwiches	Yes	Yes
Wings	Wings, "Pasta Your Way"	BBQ ribs and chicken
Halloween	Halloween	Super Bowl Sunday
Custom pizza in the shape of a question mark	Custom pizza in the shape of a question mark	BLT pizza
Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes
Carryout	Carryout	Both
Yes	Yes	No

Il Forno's Pizzeria

Il Forno has been tossing up great thin and thick crust pizza for more than 50 years, first in Chicago, then on Roger Williams Avenue in Ravinia, and in its present location on Old Elm Road since 1972. Mike Rudolph, who started working at the pizzeria in 1974, bought the business in 1986.



Mike Rudolph

"We've been using the same pizza sauce recipe that founder Bruno Pupolo created in the 1950s," he said, but noted a trend in pizza toppings that reflects how tastes have changed over the years: "Our customers are asking for more gourmet toppings. In response, we've added unique items like hot giardinera peppers, eggplant, artichoke, pineapple, fresh tomatoes, and fresh garlic."

Rudolph loves being a part of the Highland Park community. "I'm proud to say we're now serving our third generation of families. It's thrilling to see grandparents bring in their grandchildren to enjoy the same great pizza that they did when they were kids."

Piero's Pizza

In the Ravinia area, Highland Parkers have been counting on Piero's for fresh, hot pizza for more than 30 years. Over those three decades, "the biggest

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PIZZA

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change in the business has been technology, such as online ordering," said owner Frank Guagliardo.

Menu items, of course, have changed too; classic pizza fare now mixes with newer offerings. "We added a gluten-free thin crust pizza a few years back and have recently added gluten-free penne pasta. Having gluten-free menu items is something our customers who require them really appreciate," said manager Marcus Howland. Piero's also sells par-baked pizza, which lets you finish baking the pizza at your convenience.

Howland understands how important it is to be community minded. "We participate in school and camp lunch programs and other local events. It's easy to be a good neighbor in a community where everyone is involved."

In the summer, Piero's is happy to deliver to Ravinia Festival. So instead of toting a picnic basket, pair your Prokofiev with a large pepperoni!



Bunnie Mesirow

Ravinia BBQ & Grill

All of Ravinia BBQ & Grill's pizza sauces are made from scratch, said the restaurant's owner Bunnie Mesirow. Under that yummy sauce on their specialty BBQ Chicken Pizza is a thin, cracker-like crust with cheddar and mozzarella cheeses, cilantro, barbecue chicken, onion, and sweet barbecue sauce. "As a bonus, the thin crust makes the pizza a little lower in calories," she added.

When it comes to pizza, the customer is always right. "Some of our customers order their pizza without cheese, and some without sauce," Mesirow said, adding that another option is to dial the spiciness of a pizza way up by adding jalapeno peppers.



Frank Guagliardo



Because Ravinia BBQ & Grill is known so well for its baby back ribs and chicken, Mesirow said "Many of our customers don't think of pizza when they first come here. But once they try it, they discover just how good it is."

Mesirow likes being a part of the Ravinia business district, and she enjoys the interaction with so many of her long-time guests. In fact next year, Ravinia BBQ & Grill will be celebrating 30 years in Highland Park!

Author Mira Temkin is a North Shore freelance writer whose articles have appeared in *Lakeland Boating*, *What's Happening*, *Chicago Upscale Travel Examiner*, and *Long Island Woman*. She also writes advertising and web copy. Reach her at miratemkin@gmail.com.