

News monitored for: Yum! Restaurants



The Italian job

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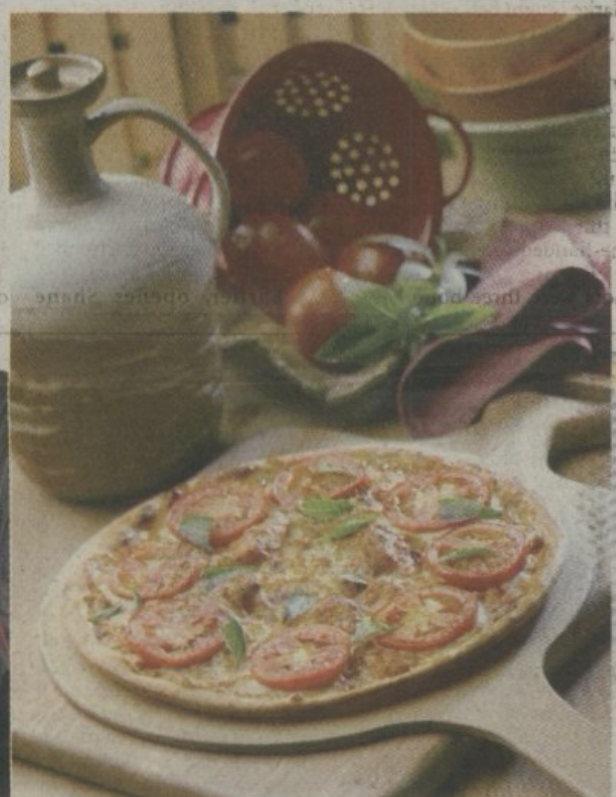
He is a man with a fetish for bold and distinct colours and talks about the time when "Queen Margarita of Savoy in Italy fell in love with a cheesy bread." Meet Arjyo Banerjee, head chef, Pizza Hut, who is trying to lure the Tuscan lovers into a wide range of thin crust and hand stretched pizzas called *Tuscani singles*—deriving name from the vibrant and cultural Tuscan region of Italy. "The Queen liked the bread so much that ordered her chef to make the same dish for her everyday. The chef added fresh tomato, cheese and basil leaves which resembled the Italian flag and the rest, as they say, is history," he says.

Going further into the history of pizza, he reveals, was a tool through which the temperature of the oven used to be measured. "Later, people started giving the left-over from the oven to the poor workers. So pizzas for a long time were the poor workers' bread," he says.

As Pizza Hut puts some interesting offerings in place, Banerjee insists the brand is trying hard to impress the bread lovers. For instance the newly launched *Bocconcini* is actually mozzarella cheese made from buffalo milk, chef claims, is exorbitantly crispy and light. The *Bruschettas*, he adds, are a "classic Italian way to start a meal".



Chef Banerjee



The lunch greets us with traditional soup, consisting of mostly the 'colourful' vegetables. This thick Italian soup, says the chef, has mostly winter vegetables in adequate proportions and soft generous pieces of penne pasta. This soup is colourful because it contains some exotic varieties of small red tomatoes, green basil leaves, onions, carrots and vegetable stock.

Made in extra virgin olive oil, topped with marinated tomatoes and a touch of salt and sugar, the starter, *Thyme*

grilled chicken and olive laced tapenade bruschetta, along with a generous amount of red wine, makes for a very sinful start. There is also *Mushroom Arancinis* for the mozzarella freaks. Next, the *Pesto Sauce Gardiner Pizza* (deriving its name from the word garden and consisting of only fresh garden vegetables) makes its way to our table. It is followed by a thin crust *Verde*. According to the chef, the *Verde* is different from the *Gardiner* because of its balsamic glaze and fresh toppings of

basil leaves which are strewn around the entire pizza and lend it aromatic flavours. The *Gouda* cheese, a special ingredient into the *Verde* enhances the taste.

The last of the *Tuscani Singles*—*Polo Heaven with Smoked Tender Chicken and Basil Leaves*—is a treat to the belly. *Pollo* means chicken in Italy and hence this special pizza comprises of three different kinds of chicken toppings. Banerjee sums up calling the chicken pizza as "just the right thing for non-veg lovers."