

Neapolitan Pizza: A Life Passion

L. A. (October 08, 2015)



Keste' & Don Antonio, Two authentic pizzeria in Manhattan. Roberto and Giorgia Caporuscio with mentor Antonio Starita are out to conquer the US of A.

Three generations join forces to champion authentic Neapolitan pizza. We're referring to an increasingly well-known trio in the gourmet world: mother-and-father team Roberto and Giorgia Caporuscio and their mentor Don Antonio Astarita, whose Pizzeria Starita on via Materdei, one of the



oldest pizzerias in Naples, has been in his family for three generations. Not only is the pizza special, but watching how they work together, never straying from the path of classic cooking, is pure Naples.

Roberto & Giorgia

After a period working in the cheese industry (about which he knows every little detail), Roberto shifted his attention to the pizzaiolo metier.

He trained with some of the most talented pizza-makers before relocating to the United States, where he has opened several popular pizzerias, most recently in New York. In 2009, he opened Kesté Pizza & Vino and in 2012, with his old friend Antonio Starita, he opened Don Antonio by Starita.

With his daughter Georgia he has created a significant generational link. Like many young Italians, Georgia came to New York in 2010 to study English. One day, her father asked her to give pizza-making a shot. “Why don’t you try to play with the dough,” he asked her, “see how we make it?” What began as a lark quickly turned serious. Under the guidance of Don Antonio, she became a rising star in the field, earning the Classical Pizza Champion title in 2013 for her Montanara Starita.

“I love pizza because it’s so simple but so particular. It’s so difficult to make yet so easy at the same time,” Georgia tells us. “Everyone eats pizza - rich people, poor people, young and old. Everyone.”

Enters Don Antonio

Starita is third-generation pizza royalty. His family’s pizzeria in Naples was featured in Vittorio De Sica’s film *L’Oro di Napoli*, in which Sofia Loren and Giacomo Furia play a couple of pizzaioli who crank out fried pizza on credit—“eat today, pay tomorrow.”

Starita has even served pizza to Pope John Paul II. His “Pizza del Papa” is one of the best-known pizzas in the world. Don’t tell this writer such recognitions count for nothing.

Starita knows everything there is to know about dough. In Naples they say he has tomato sauce coursing through his veins. “Over all these years, we have never strayed from tradition, although we have made some innovations as far as flavor is concerned,” says Starita, adding, “The pizza has retained its classic identity as a full and tasty meal. It has to remain rooted in popular Neapolitan cuisine.” His student is no slouch either.

Two styles, same guarantee

Currently, Caporuscio is US President of the Association of Neapolitan Pizza Makers. Just try asking him to substitute something on his bewilderingly large pizza menu. “I’d rather lose a client,” he says. “Our pizzas are the product of a long tradition. They don’t change.” Two pizzerias, two styles, same guarantee: real Neapolitan pizza.

Kesté (meaning “this is it” in Neapolitan) is located in the heart of Greenwich Village. It was the first authentic Neapolitan pizzeria in New York and sparked the Big Apple’s love for “real” pizza.

Farther uptown is Don Antonio by Starita. The joint has genuine Neapolitan décor and a cocktail list with an Italian twist. We recommend the Bellini. It’s a treat. You can expect the best of Naples’ best from both pizzerias: doughy delights including red pizzas, white pizzas, fried pizzas, gluten-free pizzas, stuffed pizzas, calzones, and much more. If that weren’t enough, the wood-fired oven is custom-built from volcanic soil and stone.

i-Italy recommends returning frequently and trying everything. But for starters, don’t miss “La Montanara Starita.” In our opinion, it’s the dish that drives home the point: innovation is best



achieved through tradition. What's for dessert, you ask? Indulge in "La Pizza o gli Angioletti alla Nutella" (small 'angels' with Nutella). You have to taste it to believe it.

[Don Antonio by Starita](#) [2]

w 10019, 309 W 50th St, New York, NY 10019

[Kestè Pizza e Vino](#) [3]

271 Bleecker St, New York, NY 10014

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