

## SHORT ORDER

# Sapori pizzas simply brilliant

Italian restaurant in Newport adds a space next door for Naples-style pies.

BY BRAD A. JOHNSON  
RESTAURANT CRITIC

Pizza doesn't need cheese. In Naples, the birthplace of pizza in Italy, this has long been understood. But the idea of a cheeseless pizza in America has never really caught on.

The marinara pizza at Sapori could change that. It's such a simple thing — a thin piece of dough slathered with fresh tomato sauce and quickly baked in a wood-fired oven. With a pizza like this, there is nowhere to hide. Everything must be just right. And it is. The dough bubbles up around the edges. The sauce is bright and acidic, slightly chunky with a subtle undercurrent of garlic and basil. It is absolute perfection, a revelation. The cheese industry should be afraid — very afraid.

After what seems like eternity, Sapori Ristorante in Newport Beach has finally opened its Neapolitan-style pizzeria in the space next door.

The new pizzeria is not merely next door. They knocked down the wall between the old and new spaces, allowing the two distinct restaurants to share a common bar (with the same excellent Italian wines) in the middle. They also share kitchens. The new wood-fired oven in the pizzeria services both restaurants, just as the salads and antipasti for both come from the original kitchen.

The pizzeria does have



BRAD A. JOHNSON, STAFF

Sapori's marinara pizza does not have cheese, and it is perfect like that.



Sapori Ristorante in Newport Beach recently opened Pizzeria Sapori in the space next door.

its own entrance, though, as well as separate operating hours. The pizzeria is open for lunch on weekdays, for example, while the restaurant serves only dinner.

The difference between Sapori's former pizzas and the new product is dramatic. What the restaurant used to pass off as pizza was always serviceable but never the reason for dining here. That has changed.

The Neapolitan-style

Margherita with buffalo mozzarella is superb — as close to Naples as you will find in Orange County. As is the pizza topped with spicy salami. And while the menu focuses mostly on pizzas, with a dozen variations, it also includes a few salads and antipasti, which are meant to complement the pizzas, not upstage them — although the milky, creamy burrata with prosciutto almost does that.



Meatballs are also on the menu at Pizzeria Sapori.

## Pizzeria Sapori

Where: 1080 Bayside Drive, Newport Beach  
When: Lunch weekdays, dinner nightly  
Phone: 949-644-4220  
Online: [pizzeria.sapori.com](http://pizzeria.sapori.com)

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