



ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

» CRITICS' CHOICE FOOD & DRINK

ITALIAN RESTAURANT



COURTESY OF SAPORI RISTORANTE

Sapori Ristorante and its new pizzeria offer Italian favorites and Neapolitan-style pies.

Sapori Ristorante

1080 Bayside Drive, Newport Beach
949-644-4220; saporinb.com

Sapori Ristorante just leapfrogged to the top of the Italian rankings, thanks to its new offshoot, Pizzeria Sapori, next door.

The adjoining pizza cafe was a long time in the making but finally debuted in April. The pizzeria has its own

entrance, as well as separate operating hours, but ultimately this is one contiguous restaurant. They've knocked down the wall between the old and new spaces, allowing the two distinct concepts to flow together around a common bar (serving the same excellent Italian wines) in the middle. They also share kitchens.

The new wood-fired oven in the pizzeria, for example, now services the ristorante as well, while salads and antipasti for the pizzeria come from the old kitchen. Waiters pull double duty, hopping from one side to the other.

The difference between Sapori's former pizzas and its new Neapolitan-style pies is dramatic. The marinara pizza is absolute perfection, even without cheese. The Margherita with buffalo mozzarella is equally superb – as close to Naples as you will find in Orange County.

If you're dining on the restaurant side, ask for a table on the patio, near the outdoor fireplace, surrounded by manicured greenery. If that doesn't work out, the indoor dining room charms just the same. Either way, you'll want to order the linguine with clams and the off-menu veal chop, which pairs amazingly with a sexy Gattinara from Nebbiolo.



by

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