

Fairport-East Rochester Post

Jozeppi's Pizzeria: A slice of life

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Fairport, N.Y. — There are many pizza joints in Fairport, but not all of them have more than 40 years of family history behind them.

You might remember the Italian eatery Clemente's that was open for 32 years at 84 High St. in Fairport and eight years in Rochester. Owner Clemente Suero and his wife, Carol retired and sold the business in 2003, but now he's back behind the counter.

"We've brought him out of retirement," said daughter-in-law Joanne, who married son, Joe. She is the owner of Jozeppi's Pizzeria, which celebrated its first anniversary in February.

It's been a project that you could call a next generation endeavor. Joanne, of Pittsford, says the simplicity of pizza is what makes it such an enjoyable business to get into. She says her three children don't hesitate to share the pride of having a family pizzeria with their peers. Matthew, 9, has even written a picture book about the store entitled "How to Make a Pizza" with a pie on the front and detailed instructions about using the giant dough mixer.

Suero and her husband now live in Pittsford, but both were raised in Fairport. That, and the fact that her in-laws owned Clemente's for so long, it's a name that many community members will recognize.

"You've got to find your niche in the community," said Suero.

And while the New York style brick oven pizza isn't for everybody, she says customers from Long Island and Connecticut come specially for the thin crust. In the days of carb-conscious customers, this is a healthier alternative to thick, doughy crusts found at other pizza places.

"You don't feel as guilty with thick crust," she added.

But if your appetite is bigger than that, you might enjoy The Tunnel, an original sub sandwich that can be described best as filling — both for the customer and the unique way that it's made. The cook takes a loaf of homemade bread, removes the soft center and fills the "tunnel" with meatballs, sausage, cheese steak or other meaty fillings of choice.

The tiny shop itself is a former hair salon, and can seat 14 people. Many regular customers stop in for a slice, and business is busiest — as parishioners from Church of the Assumption, which is just a stone's throw away on the same street, file in to be fed after regular services. Students in search of an after-school snack are also easy to find at the restaurant, where it's easy to buy enough for the group or by the slice.

Whether it's their fresh dough made daily or homemade sauce, Suero says you can count on getting a quality product.

"No cutting corners here," she said.

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