



Food Talk



November Dine Around at A Mano Neapolitan Trattoria **Heidi Raker Goldstein**

On Wednesday, November 11, we gathered at 2-year-old A Mano, meaning by hand, in Ridgewood, NJ, 1 of only 3 U.S. restaurants to receive prestigious certifications from both the Verace Pizza Napoletana and Associazione Pizzaiuoli Napoletani, the recognized authorities of Naples, Italy on traditional Neapolitan Pizza. GM Anthony White prefaced multiple traditional Neapolitan courses with a fascinating, delicious tasting of EVOO from three regions of Italy.



We learned to properly slurp the oil from a small plastic cup, (as opposed to bread, as it detracts from the oil's subtle flavors and aromas) sniffing out floral notes in some and vegetables in others. We started with a light EVOO from the Liguria region, ideal for pesto preparation thanks to its delicate, floral undertones. Our second oil was from the hills of Sicily and possessed medium intensity, smelling of freshly cut grass and redolent with tomato undertones, making it well suited for chicken or lighter protein pairings. Our third oil hailed from Tuscany and was rich in luscious artichoke and zesty green pepper notes, making it perfect for finishing a braised dish.

Everything at A Mano is imported from Italy, from San Marzano tomatoes to specially built pizza ovens, which are heated to 1000°F. Our first course was focaccia, prepared with 00 Caputo flour, salt and oregano, and perfectly charred in a 90 second trip to the oven. It was followed by a salad of house-made mozzarella, tomatoes, and balsamic reduction. Next we enjoyed a hot antipasto, then a light salad of greens, Parmigiano-Reggiano and marinated long-stemmed artichoke, along with an array of tasty entrees. Dessert was a nutella-stuffed pizza, simultaneously delicate and decadent.

IMAGE (above): Dine Around Chair Laura Tappan's Academia pizza was covered Caciocavallo cheese, Prosciutto di Parma, Parmigiano-Reggiano, cherry tomatoes, EVOO, and basil.