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RESTAURANT REVIEW
Steve's Wood Fired Pizza/Boca Raton

★★★★☆

By Judith Stocks
Dining Correspondent
Posted May 25 2007

Before the explosion of wood-fired pie joints coloring the South Florida landscape with their "well-done" crusts, there was Steve's.

That's Steve Greenberg, a New Yorker who opened Steve's Wood Fired Pizza in 1999. Much of his early pizza training came from stints at Sbarro's, California Pizza Kitchen, The Pizza Factory and Stocks Wood Fired Pizza Cafe (no relation to yours truly). As for his signature dish, the 10-inch artisan pies are made with hand-rolled dough and low-fat mozzarella. They don't come any bigger than the 10-inchers -- any larger and the intense 700-degree heat of the wood-burning oven would scorch the pie's outer edges before the rest of the pie cooked.

RESTAURANT INFO

Cuisine: Italian
9180 Glades Road, Boca Raton
561-483-5665
Cost: inexpensive
Credit Cards: D, MC, V
Hours: lunch Tuesday-Saturday, dinner Tuesday-Saturday (closed Mondays until season)
Reservations: accepted for parties of six or more
Sound level: can be noisy
Bar: beer, wine
Smoking: outdoors
Wheelchair Accessible: yes
Children's Facilities: boosters, high chairs
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Steve's is the pizza parlor of today: a great family-friendly spot with warm Tuscan styling and seating for just 40 - so please don't bombard them all at once. Each bare wood table is equipped with a metal wire rack to hold your pie. The star of the show, an imported Italian, stone-floored, wood-fired oven spewing flames, can be

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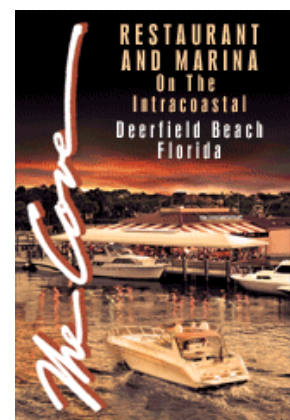
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appreciated from almost any vantage point.

I applaud the service for being warm and welcoming. Everyone works as a team and there doesn't seem to be a single soul on board who doesn't care greatly about your experience.

Start with something from a nice array of salads to precede your pie -- the ones with protein can be a meal. Full-size salads serve two; half sizes feed one quite nicely. Just-right amounts of housemade balsamic add the right touch to crisp romaine, walnuts (lots of 'em) and gorgonzola (could use more) at \$7.50 for the half. Or have Oriental-style grilled chicken salad with fresh cilantro and scallions in sweet/sour dressing (\$10.50). Don't overlook pasta dishes, especially a terrific penne pomodoro (\$12.50). Its fragrant homemade sauce is flavored by sauteed garlic, fresh basil and motz, with pasta cooked so it still has a bite.

Now, about the pies. The crusts are thin, slightly chewy and loaded with ingredients. For purists, Steve's Famous -- plum tomato sauce, motz and other seasoned cheese is just the ticket at \$9.50 -- or a classic Margherita is \$11.50. For more adventurous palates, the range includes a BLT model sporting bacon, fresh tomatoes and romaine (\$11.50); a Mediterranean (\$13.95) with artichoke hearts, spinach, goat cheese, kalamata olives, capers, mozzarella and fresh tomato sauce; and white pizza with seasoned ricotta, oven-roasted garlic and mozzarella (\$11.50). Or how about bean sprouts, carrots, chopped peanuts and grilled chicken for an \$11.50 Thai-style pie?

Even the cheeseless versions are good, especially the one with grilled eggplant, infused oil, red onions, fresh spinach and sun-dried tomatoes served with balsamic dipping sauce (\$10.75). You won't go wrong with any pizza, but my favorites are barbecue chicken (\$12.50) with chicken chunks, barbecue sauce, sliced red onion, fresh cilantro, mozzarella and smoked gouda, and the version with both hot and mild sausage, fresh bell peppers, white onions and mozzarella (\$12.75). The shrimp scampi with nicely cooked whole large shrimp and housemade scampi sauce (\$14.99) is no slouch either.

Do your best to save room for superb tiramisu or the equally wonderful tiramisulike dessert with toasted almonds standing in for the chocolate (\$6.99 each). Though not made on premises, they're not the usual yawners. Then again, this isn't your father's pizza parlor.

Please phone in advance to confirm information on hours, prices, menu items and facilities. For review consideration, please fax a current menu that includes name and address of restaurant to 954-356-4386 or send to Sun-Sentinel, 200 E. Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301-2293.

Contact dining correspondent Judith Stocks at

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