

# Napolita Pizzeria serves it up, old school

Italian cuisine, new styles of pizza are Napolita's standouts

by Hannah Young

Napolita Pizzeria & Wine Bar opened in Wilmette on Dec. 7 and brought with it a new style of pizza and genuine Italian cuisine, unlike any other in the North Shore.

"It's authentic, Neapolitan pizza. It's not your traditional pizza place," manager Heather Wainman said.

According to Chef Nick Alvarez, what sets Napolita Pizza apart from other pizza places is "the fact that we try our very best to actually maintain the standards of true Neapolitan pizza. We just try to deviate from that as little as possible."

Before joining Napolita, Alvarez, a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu of Culinary Arts Chicago, worked at Eatery and Caffè Oliva.

"I have a lot of experience with Italian cuisine, so the transition was just second nature really. All the production just comes very naturally to me. I do have a passion for Italian and Mediterranean fare," he said.

"90% of our ingredients are imported," Wainman said. "So we have very high quality ingredients."

Waitress Jessica Bernardi further explained, "We have a lot import-



Napolita Pizzeria, located at 1126 Central Ave, Wilmette serves Italian cuisine and unique pizzas | [napolitapizza.com](http://napolitapizza.com)

ed products like our Burrata, which comes once a week from Rome." Burrata is a soft Italian cheese, made of cream and mozzarella.

Located near downtown Wilmette, Napolita is a "small, intimate place" Bernardi said. While a packed restaurant can be favorable to some, Wainman sees it as an obstacle. "Probably the biggest challenge is that we don't have a lot of room in our restaurant. People aren't always comfortable being crammed in here."

With two small rooms and a bar area, the customers have noticed a lack of space for dining. Junior Bridget Knudson said, "It was kind of uncomfortable waiting at the bar be-

cause you're packed in a little."

Wilmette residents have welcomed Napolita with open arms, most excited for a new restaurant, replacing Gilson's.

"The neighborhood has been very welcoming also. It seems like there's been kind of a want or need for this for some time, so they took to us immediately. They embraced us," Chef Alvarez said.

The new trend for pizzerias is to become Vera Pizza Napoletana (VPN) certified. Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana, a nonprofit organization, protects the authentic Italian Neapolitan pizza and gives restaurants the honor of calling their

product "true Neapolitan pizza."

"We try to stay very true to the VPN rules. The ingredients are very clean and I think that's a big thing right now. People care about their health, they care about their nutrition. It's actually very good for you," Wainman said.

This certification requires the restaurant to have a wood-burning, dome. Alvarez explained the benefits of having an authentic oven: "Having our actual Neapolitan style oven is really what separates us from your average pizza joint. You can't really get those results if you don't have that oven. It's just not the same."

Luke Marran, a busboy, elaborated

on the authenticity of their technique: "They have that huge oven... Just being able to see them toss the dough and put it in the oven. That's something you don't get anywhere else."

Wainman thinks the extra care they give to customers is another thing that keeps them coming in the door.

"We take care of all of all of our customers as far as getting them everything that they need. We have different things that people can try, something that they keep coming back for. We provide a warm, very hospitable environment."

Napolita's pizzas aren't the only products customers are raving about. "The fried risotto balls were amazing. Fresh out of the oven with a crispy, delicious texture. But I was disappointed that they didn't serve bread before the meal," said Knudson.

While pizza is the focus of their menu, Napolita offers a variety of options such as gourmet pastas, breaded veal, roasted Mediterranean black sea bass, and an array of specials, added by Chef Alvarez and Executive Chef Brian Gusich.

Napolita has become a new destination for Wilmette. Whether it's a Saturday night during dinner rush or a Monday night, it's always packed. Wainman said, "We've been very busy. Happy customers. Great staff. Great service. Great food. We love it here."

## Live from New Trier, it's Stephanie Reedy

by Tia Rotolo

Stephanie Reedy, a junior, began her acting career in third grade. Eight years later, she's blocking, writing and directing her own sketch comedies.

At New Trier, Stephanie Reedy is known for performing in Lagniappe Potpourri and in-house improv groups like NQA and Harold and Maude.

Libby Markham, fellow Lagniappe cast member, remembers Reedy as an enthusiastic leader. Markham said, "She's so dedicated to everything that she does."

Outside of school, Reedy works with the Actor's Training Center in Wilmette, where she got her start in third grade. The Actor's Training Center works on honing and improving young actors and actresses through improv, acting and musical theatre.

Reedy's main teacher and coach is ATC Director, Carole Dibo. Dibo has been working with Reedy for many years as an actress. "Stephanie's an actor's actor. She's very open to all Media and totally a team player. She loves making others look good," Dibo said.

Although Reedy's career began with acting in school plays, it has quickly progressed into sketch comedy.

"At the same time I started acting, I was also doing improv," Reedy said, "From there, improv just transitioned into sketch comedy." Sketch comedy is a series of skits, ranging anywhere from twenty seconds to three minutes.

Reedy said performing in sketch comedy is slightly different than traditional acting.

"Sketch comedy is a lot more witty," Reedy said. "You're playing for a joke. Acting typically has lasting themes and isn't always funny." Not only does Reedy perform in the sketches, she writes and directs them. "I prefer to co-write. It's easier to work with others," Reedy said.

That love for working with other minds stems from the simple fact that she struggles with always finding inspiration. "I normally just take things that happen to me in real life and exaggerate them," Reedy said.

Weeks prior to the shows are solely for preparation and writing. "We typically only do one rehearsal on the stage. We add in props later. It's a very fastpaced, yet relaxed," Reedy said.

As a student, most of her work lies in assignments. She is usually given a two week period to complete the script for her sketch comedy. "Normally we write a rough draft and then shape it with our team to make it better," Reedy said. "It's a group effort in the end. We're constantly changing and improving certain aspects."

Her directing process is the same. "We're working as a team to make it the best it can be," Reedy said. "We're shaping something to make people laugh. It's fun," Reedy said.

Their sketch comedy and improv group has gone on to perform at esteemed venues such as the Improv Olympics in Chicago.

The Improv Olympics rivals Second City in improv comedy, a venue where comedians like Amy Poehler performed at the start of their career.

Reedy said she'll never forget the experience of working with professionals at Improv Olympics in Chicago.

"It felt like you were really doing it with people who are actively performing," Reedy said. "I prefer having an audience that's going for fun and because they wanted to, instead of just going because they're related to you."

While Reedy loves working with her troupe, she also valued the experience of working with other kids at Second City workshops. "They teach us a lot about building stories and relationships," Reedy said.

## Lollapalooza, now with 25% more fun

Four days of Lolla leaves some excited, some concerned

by Georgia Caras

Lollapalooza is often the highlight of the summer for many students, but the newly announced fourth day is bringing mixed emotions.

Lollapalooza, attended by a large amount of New Trier students each year, is expanding its festivities to four days, one more day than the usual three, in honor of its 25th anniversary this summer.

According to the festival's website, Lollapalooza founder Perry Farrell said that in honor of Lolla's 25th anniversary, "We wanted to do something really special and different for our fans. There's a lot of really great music coming out in 2016; with the abundance of talent that wanted to help us celebrate 25 years we got to thinking... 'How are we going to fit all those great artists in one weekend?'... So, we've put together an entire additional day of music to celebrate our mile-stone year. It's going to be a fantastic party!"

This announcement was music to many student's ears.

When asked why New Trier students love Lollapalooza so much, junior Brett Zaslavsky said, "It's an opportunity to hang out with your friends and see some great artists, spend some time in the city. It's something to look forward to."

Sophomore Freddy McClanahan said, "It captures the freedom of our generation. It allows them to express themselves socially and emotionally. It's their music, and it's really a great place to let out some feelings and go out and have some fun."

Senior Brendan Gridley said, "I think the Lolla atmosphere is pretty unique because there's a lot of other New Trier students there... part of why everyone goes is mostly to catch up with other students over the summer and talk to people they haven't seen since school got out."



As part of its 25th anniversary, Lollapalooza will be four days | AP Images

Sophomore Juliana Bozzo said, "In terms of price, it's a really a good deal considering the amount of people you get to see in one day."

Junior Mata Stilp, said, "It's an excuse to get crazy with all of your good friends."

Although the student body as a whole seems to enjoy Lolla, feelings were mixed when students were asked about how they personally felt about attending the extended festival. Although excited, many additionally expressed concern.

"I'll tell ya, hold on to your hat folks, because Lollapalooza one day is exhausting. Lollapalooza three days is very draining, and I don't know if I have a fourth day in me," said Zaslavsky.

Senior Matt Williams agreed. "I might go four days. Last time I died on Sunday, but I am absolutely stoked."

"Four days sounds great, and you know there's going to be some awesome artists there because it's the 25th anniversary. But then again, it's just another day for kids to get injured, hurt, sick, etc., and I don't know if that's worth the risk," said junior Eden Rane.

The concerns students have for their health at the festival are not unsupported. According to Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital's website, "ER visits during Lollapa-

looz were more than double those during Spring Awakening, which had the second highest admission rates, five times higher than those over St. Patrick's Day weekend and seven times higher than an average weekend in Chicago.

Though underage drinking may be common, that doesn't make it safe. During Lollapalooza weekend, 102 teens were treated for alcohol poisoning in Chicago's ERs. Each of the teens tested in Lurie Children's ER that weekend had blood alcohol levels above the adult limit for driving (.08). Some even had a level of .32 or higher, which is considered toxic and potentially deadly."

"I think the key to staying out of the hospital during Lolla is simple: stay safe and responsible. You're given a lot of freedom at Lolla, and you need to use it wisely," said junior Cormac Simon.

According to the festival's website, "Lollapalooza 2016 will take place Thursday, July 28 and continue through Sunday, July 31. Four-day General Admission tickets will be available for \$335 (including fees) and single day General Admission tickets will be available for \$120 (including fees) beginning Spring 2016."