

Connoisseur samples the Chapel Hill scene

# Pizza — The stomach is a lonely hunter

A lot of local pizza eaters are presently disgruntled with Chapel Hill pizza. Many contend that quality pizzas are few and far between in the village. However things could be worse.

After (belch) sampling the pies of (rurrrrrp . . . ah) 14 local restaurants, this poll did find some satisfactory fare. The local dissatisfaction rests not only in the pizza, but in the consumer himself. Everyone wants something unique in his pie.

Pizza eaters generally fall into two, sometimes mutually exclusive camps: crust lovers and topping lovers. The Americanized pizza eater usually concentrates on topping, while his Italian counterpart relishes a thick, yet rather crisp, crust. However, the great majority of us acknowledge the importance of both layers. Crusts come in various thicknesses and textures. Sicilian pizzas are admired for their very thick crust and disparaged by others for their extreme chewiness. By the same token,

disagreement *ad infinitum* rages over how tomatoey a good pizza should be, just as no sure measure exists over how thick the mozzarella should be. Tastes and preferences have evolved through the ages as has the pizza itself. Pizza originated somewhere back in the Neolithic Age. Tomatoes became available in the 16th century, followed by other ingredients two centuries later. The dish was complete. The Bourbons served pizza in the Palace of Caserta and Ferdinand IV was known for having them baked in the porcelain factory of Capodimonte. One variety of pizza, *pizza Margherita*, was served originally in honor of the first Queen of All Italy. By using red tomatoes, white mozzarella and green basil, this pizza was particularly relished for its approximation of the Italian flag.

Pizza may have early found an audience outside of Italy, according to one unidentifiable and probably unreliable source. Beowulf, in his beer fellowship during celebration of the sea monster Grendel, was said to have partaken of the favorite combination—beer and pizza. Finally pizza made it to this continent, and was possibly served first on Coney Island. Americans in their native quest for the bigger and better, have added a host of toppings to the fare. For objectivity's sake, many would contend that a pizza poll should sample pizzas with the same toppings at each restaurant. However, this survey, because of limitations of choice, tried to sample the special items. The restaurants appear in the order they were visited.

*Pizza Transit Authority (PTA)*—the pizza here is at least the third best in town. The sauce is both tomatoey and spicy, and is probably better than anyone else's. The crust is also excellent, being fairly thick, yet crisp. PTA makes their own dough and sauce. 50-50's are available, as well as double crusts. Disappointment with PTA arises from their free delivery service, which especially during busy weekends may deliver a warm to cool pizza. During my visit, one driver called in flat and no jack. Mark Wooley, manager, said that he had five flats last month.

*Pizzaville*—Although you can't say a lot about their pizzas, the generous amounts of salad and ice tea make a visit worthwhile. Pizzaville has regular customers that attest to this fact. Pizzaville's topping of sausage, mushroom and onion is satisfactory. John

Williams, manager, said that he adds spices when his cheese is crumbled for "an extra kick." However, the mozzarella tends to string when pulled off the pie and may end up around your nose. The crust is very thin and dough is bought somewhere else and refrigerated. Muzak soothes your hunger pains, and prices are reasonable. Wait—14 minutes.

*Peppi's (Franklin St.)*—another average pizza, just like the last—hot tasty topping on a cardboard crust. Ron Vickers, manager, said that during the luncheon special you can get as many refills at the salad bar as desired. Privacy is attained through darkness, and the decor is 20th Century Borden Brick. The

in the juice that spreads throughout the pizza. If you like it hot, you may like them.

Decor is a little different, offering light enough to read your menu, and a sign over the kitchen that says "slave quarters." Bathroom is suited for the physically handicapped. Not too long a wait. Great service.

*Kwik-ee Take-Out*—Winner of the *Silver Pepperoni* for best pizza on the bus route. Best mozzarella anywhere—very thick and flavorful. The crust takes a back seat only to Marios and is made with high gluten flour for more protein. The sauce is a pizza sauce spiced with oregano, oil, salt, pepper and a little sugar. Pizza is not cooked on a pan. "I don't make pizza like most of these guys around Chapel Hill," owner Tom Mariakakis said. "I used to sell pizza in Times Square and people up there know good pizza."

A fine selection of beer is offered. Kwik-ee's decor must be seen to be believed. Just as at Marios, appearances do not matter. Prices are very reasonable. Wait—16 minutes.

*Ram's Head Ratheskellar*—Everything is brought from a company in Virginia. The pizza is very average, although less greasy than others. Small pizzas are half-moons of the 16-inch standard. Like any Danziger restaurant, the interior is interesting. Prices are reasonable. Short wait—9 minutes.

*Pizza Hut*—A pizza here will taste like one in a Pizza Hut in Kalamazoo, because of the standardized goodie bag of spices for the sauce. The mozzarella is chewy, the crust a lot like poster board (double and triple crusts are available) and the whole thing way overpriced. However, on the table are real candles. The fireplace is wastefully fueled with natural gas. A plastic plaque announces that "Hospitality Starts Here," but it is located next to the exit. Open every day but Christmas. Wait—who cares.

*P.J.'s*—The tomato sauce is very good, and the meat balls as a topping are a nice change. Thin crust, slightly flakey, but Al Thomas, part owner, said they might try making it thicker. Dough is made almost every day, and pizza is cooked on a hearth. Mushrooms are not available. The interior has been described as "neo-sputnik" and the sound system is good. Reasonable prices. Wait—15 minutes.



Pizza eater

*Zoom-Zoom*—Here is the same pizza as the Ratheskellar's, with the same large selection of toppings. Wilbur Farrar, manager, said that he cooks his pizza a little longer at a lower temperature for more flavor, but surveyor tasted no difference. However, keep in mind what his taste buds have been through. Same prices. Wait?

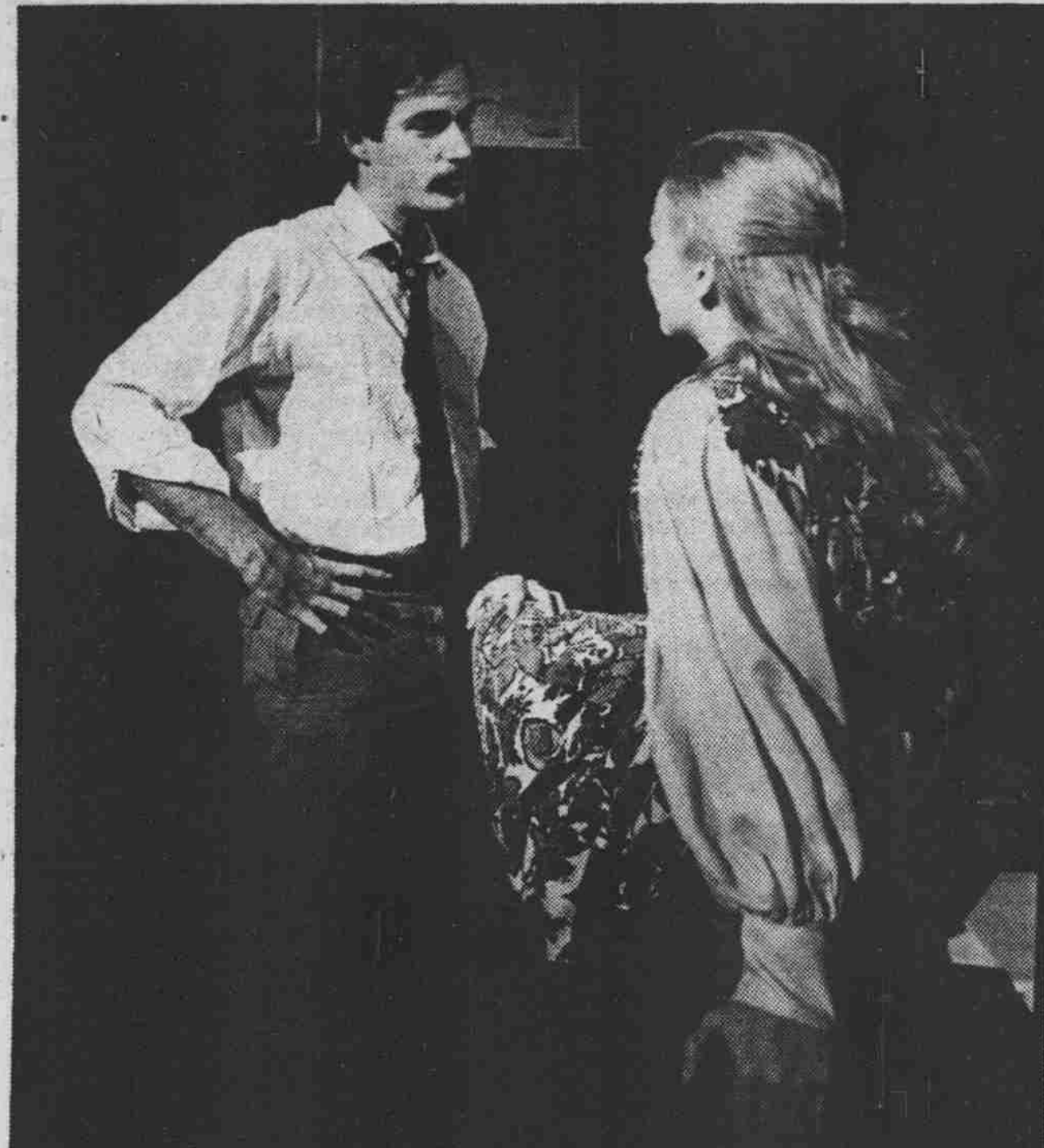
*Leo's*—Winner of the *Mozzarella Cup* for lowest priced pizza in town. A 12" pizza for a \$1.50 cannot be matched anywhere, and extras are only 25 cents more as opposed to 50 cents at many other places. Pecans, which manager Nick Capral says is a popular topping, is 50 cents extra. The pizza is very good, although the crust is nothing to write home about. Dough is made there, and the tomato sauce comes from tomatoes.

Folk songs play in the background, and the room is dominated by a huge blow-up of a shoreline, which Capral said is somewhere off of California. He has an interesting selection of wines and beers.

Even with his modest prices, Capral said he makes double on each pizza, which makes you wonder what the other guys are doing. Wait—15 minutes.

*Orange Bowl*—Located in the Mall, it features Peppi's ingredients and is cooked in four minutes. Need I say more? Only one size is available (16") and one topping—pepperoni. You can buy it by the slice, too. Prices are slightly steep.

*Riverview Pizza Tavern*—Everything in the pizza is bought ready-made. The mozzarella is prepared with onion salt and was overdone on the one I tried, since nothing else could be tasted. You can get a 50-50, and the ice tea is bottomless. Prices are reasonable and two-for-the-price-of-one coupons are available in this paper. T.V. on wall. Average wait.



A scene from Patty Gideon Sloan's "Beginnings," presented by the Lab Theatre today at 4 and 8 p.m. in 06 Graham Memorial.

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PAC	TEAM	VEER
ALA	HONE	ALMA
CAT	ESTABLISH	
ASHES	ALOE	
EDEN	STRAP	
CADI	AILLS	EGO
HURT	IRE	EMIR
ORA	ELKS	RIOT
WALTZ	SPIN	
ERAS	UNDER	
CHARACTER	FILE	
OURS	TOLE	URN
PIETE	SAME	LED

1 Greek letter  
2 Swiss river

3 European  
4 Idle chatter  
5 Marked by intrigue  
6 Spoken  
7 Tear  
8 Cooled lava  
9 Fish eggs  
10 Harvest goddess  
11 Unit of Siamese currency  
12 Macaw  
13 Room in ancient Roman house (pl.)  
14 Choose  
15 Man's name  
16 Snare  
17 Nuisance  
18 Essential  
19 Note of scale  
20 Preposition  
21 Macaw  
22 Part of jacket  
23 Later in time  
24 Obtains  
25 Muse of poetry  
27 Slaves  
29 Tableland  
31 Moccasin  
33 Strip of leather  
37 Free of  
38 Remains erect  
42 Near  
45 Peel  
46 Bad  
47 In favor of  
48 Lubricate  
49 Insane  
50 Church bench  
52 Anger  
53 Piece out  
55 Pronoun

Distr. by United Feature Syndicate, Inc. 2-14