

Pasquale's Pizzeria Napoletana Named Twelfth Best Pizza in the USA

The notable guide 50 Top Pizza named the top fifty pizzas in the United States.

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by Jamie Coelho (<https://www.rimonthly.com/bios/jamie-coelho/>)



(<https://www.rimonthly.com/content/uploads/2023/07/g/j/img-4866.jpg>)

Pasquale Illiano. Photo by Ron Cowie, courtesy of Pasquale's Pizzeria Napoletana.

50 Top Pizza USA 2023 (<https://www.50toppizza.it/referenza/pasquales-pizzeria-napoletana/>) named its top fifty pizzerias in the United States and **Pasquale's Pizzeria Napoletana** (<https://www.50toppizza.it/referenza/pasquales-pizzeria-napoletana/>) in South Kingstown came in at number twelve. The first fifteen positions on the list of the 50 Top Pizza USA 2023 will now compete in the 100 Best Pizzerias in the World ranking. An awards ceremony will be held at the Palazzo Reale in Naples on Sept. 13.

“This is a huge achievement, not only for me but now Rhode Island is on the map,” says Pasquale's Pizzeria Napoletana owner Pasquale Illiano.

“It is an amazing reward because the best pizzaiolos in the country are on this legit list. 50 top pizza is an organization of Italian and global gastronomic journalists and professionals,” Illiano says. “Putting Rhode Island on the map is the ultimate achievement. I always truly believe that every neighborhood has a pizza that people love and pizza brings everyone together. So, cheers to the pizza world and cheers to Rhode Island!”



(<https://www.rimonthly.com/content/uploads/2023/07/n/q/screenshot-2023-07-13-at-115615-am.png>)

Photo by Ron Cowie, courtesy of Pasquale's Pizzeria Napoletana.

We chatted with Illiano a few years ago about the complex process of making VPN-certified Neapolitan pizzas. Here's what he had to say:

Illiano is a native of Naples who adapted to American tastes when he first moved to the United States.

“Being a native of Naples, I’ve had the urge to open a true Neapolitan pizzeria. I trained in making Neapolitan pizza back in Naples before I came to the United States. I have been working with authentic New York-style pizza ever since I moved to the States, which was back in 1995. I had to adapt to what the market was offering. Pizza was not Neapolitan, it was New York.”

He opened a true Neapolitan restaurant in South Kingstown in 2015.

“I wanted to go really authentic with the pizza and even other features of the restaurant. I wanted to go back to the roots and concentrate on the authentic Neapolitan Italian style.”

Neapolitan pizza is in Illiano's blood.

“I was born and raised in Naples and I have an absolute knowledge of the product. It's something that is inside me. It's what I do. It's what I am. I own the restaurant, and I am the chef and the main pizzaiolo in the establishment. It's very important to me to keep those standards because I was born and raised in Naples and I am very proud of where I am from.”

Achieving VPN status was a no-brainer, and it's not given to just any pizza place.

“I love what I'm doing and becoming part of VPN was just for me. A lot of people consider it to be a marketing move, but they are very strict about it and you have to follow standards and be on top of your game. You can have a sign on the door and consider it good publicity but if the pizza is not up to standards, the AVPN will take that away from you.”

The type of tomatoes used is one of the crucial details about his pizza.

“We offer the D.O.P. pizza, and on it, there is a special type of tomato (piennolo) that only grows on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius in volcanic soil. They are small round tomatoes that can be red or yellow. They're the best-tasting tomatoes on the planet. When you open that jar, you get a smell of Naples in the air.”

Simplicity is best.

“What makes Neapolitan pizza unique is that simple ingredients give you an explosion of flavors that you can’t experience anywhere else but on Neapolitan pizza. You don’t have to travel to Naples to get the pizza. We give it to you in ninety seconds.”

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