

Clean Plate Club (June 7, 2006)

By Sera Parris-B. | photo by Sera Parris-B.

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Crust Hand Crafted Pizza & Wine Great Expectations



This 10-week-old number fits its slogan: "Located just beyond your expectations." At first glance, one might think Crust Hand Crafted Pizza & Wine is just another pizza place, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Located in the heart of Rochester, Crust offers a unique and innovative menu perfect for any pizza lover. CPC fell in love with Crust because this restaurant offers one of the best ideas we have ever experienced — pizza with wine. But this isn't just any glass of wine with an 8-inch pie, this is your choice of 35 different kinds of wine (beer, signature drinks and sangria are also available) and three signature styles of pizza: White (no sauce), Red (tomato sauce) and Naples Classics (light tomato sauce).

CPC took the advice of owner Curtis Nordeen and tried the house specials: one of the Red pizzas, Cheese Glorious Cheese, and a Naples Classic Margherita. While we waited for our piping hot pies covered in the freshest ingredients, we sampled appetizers that were simply to-die-for. CPC was amazed by the spinach dip with roasted red peppers and artichoke hearts accompanied by warm flatbread. Just as delicious was the richly flavored cup of White Bean soup. Other pre-pizza options included three fresh salads, Flatbread with Baked Goat Cheese and fire-roasted Red sauce, as well as Spiedini — oven-roasted skewers of provolone cheese and prosciutto di Parma.

After these tempting appetizers, which the CPC devoured, it was time for some of the best pizza this side of Italy. The Cheese Glorious Cheese is a part of the Red family which truly was "a deeper yet sexy flavored pizza that appeals more to the American palate," as Nordeen explained when asked to describe what makes the Red pizzas so unique. This particular pie is some of the best comfort food the CPC has come across — smothered in four cheeses: Parmigiano, Mozzarella, Provolone and Fontinella. "Cheese Glorious was designed around the concept of a grilled cheese and tomato soup. We wanted people to have a pie that can take the stress out of any day," Nordeen said. CPC found that after a hard day's work Cheese Glorious did just that.

For the stress-free crowd, the Naples Classics offer two extraordinary lighter and healthier pizzas. One can try the Veusio which is topped with grape tomatoes, imported anchovy, extra virgin olive oil, capers, mozzarella, provolone and oregano. Another Naples Classic is the Margherita, which was so good that the CPC fought over the last two slices. The Margherita has crushed San Marzano Tomatoes, extra virgin olive oil, fresh mozzarella and hand-torn basil all on a light red sauce.

For the experimental crowd, the White pizzas offer a classy and sophisticated pie with such themes as Shrimp Pesto, Thai Pie, Pancetta, Prosciutto and Bianca. These pies combine fresh and out-of-the-ordinary toppings such as caramelized sweet onions on the Pacetta or peanut-ginger sauce and Asian broccoli slaw on the Thai Pie. But not to leave out the "build your own" crowd, one can create their own slices of heaven with a variety of fresh veggies, five cheeses and a choice meats. Moreover, if pizza doesn't strike one's fancy, Crust also offers Lasagna Florentine, Linguini with Shrimp and a sassy Chicken Sandwich.

Just when CPC thought this restaurant could not get any better, our friendly waitress tempted us with the six heavenly well-sized shot glasses full of dessert. CPC tried the Black Forest Cake and the Key Lime Pie and once again fought over the last bite of these sweet after-meal chasers.

Crust has found a way to put a divine spin on what metro Detroiters think of when they think of pizza. CPC was truly delighted with Crust's sensational tastes. Watch for more locations in the near future. |
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Crust Hand Crafted Pizza & Wine

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Hours: Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 11p.m.; Sunday, 11a.m. to 9 p.m.