

Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar: Your Next Great Meal

BY SUSAN BENTON

Local restaurateur Dave Rauschkolb has a passion for food and life. In 2007, as the owner of the iconic Bud & Alley's restaurant, located in the heart of Seaside, Florida, he decided to mix things up a bit. He took a trip with local architect Leo Casas south of the border and to San Diego, in search of the most authentic Mexican cuisine. Rauschkolb returned home and opened a traditional Mexican taqueria to rave reviews. It was aptly named Bud & Alley's Taco Bar, situated literally next to his primary restaurant.

room is warm and cozy, filled with design touches by Rauschkolb's wife Carol (of Carol Murphy Design), such as the antique pizza peels perfectly arranged on the wall.

Manager Joe Beane says, "Many customers rave about the tomato red recycled chairs made from plastic coke bottles." The crisp and modern bar area, located in the front of the eatery, allows for a journey of the senses, as diners can watch made-from-scratch pizza dough fly high the air, hand-tossed and lovingly topped with fresh local ingredients, before a quick bake in the wood-fired

cheeses, and flour from Italy, to deliver the most authentic taste. Though the choice was difficult, we decided on the Margherita and Salami Napoli Pizze, to which Manager Beane replies, "This is by far my favorite, but you can't go wrong with any of them!" Layered with Felino Salami, local honey, red pepper flakes, and fresh mozzarella, it was spicy, sweet and sublime.

Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar features an incredible selection of authentic Italian inspired menu items that still stay true to Rauschkolb's culinary commitment to serving fresh local fare. The offerings include a wide array of antipasti dishes, seasonal vegetables, artisan cheeses and cured meats, fresh salads, local seafood, hearty pasta dishes, and special pastas prepared for children. There is great comfort in knowing that Rauschkolb offers honest food, simply prepared with care, in a beautiful setting, served with an abundance of warm Southern hospitality.



The wood-burning oven is the centerpiece of the Pizza Bar's open kitchen. The menu offers hearty pasta dishes, artisan cheeses and sliced meats, seafood, the freshest salads and seasonal vegetables, and a variety of authentic Napoli-style pizzas.

In 2009 the urge for a different cuisine struck again, but this time Rauschkolb found himself hungry for Italian. Rauschkolb and Casas teamed up and headed to Rome, Italy (where Casas studied architecture), with wives Carol and Tara. It was fortunate that the Casas, fluent in Italian, made the trip as the couples then traveled to Naples and the Isle of Ischia off the coast of Naples, talking with locals and gathering menu ideas along the way. Rauschkolb says, "We discovered a wonderful café overlooking the Mediterranean Sea that inspired the design for what would become Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar."

Nestled in the Gulf dunes on the western edge of Seaside, Bud & Alley's Pizza bar has splendid Gulf breezes from the outdoor shaded terrace with comfortable sofa seating, while the courtyard patio offers large farm tables for traditional Italian family-style dining and is a wonderful spot for people watching. The indoor dining

oven stoked with Southern oak. Rauschkolb says, "It only takes 60 seconds to cook one of our Napoli-style, thin crust, hand-tossed pizzas in the 750-degree wood fired oven."

Friend Lynn Nesmith (local writer, author, and Rauschkolb's publicist), met me for lunch on a dreary and cool beach afternoon. Prior to arrival, I was thinking about again ordering the scrumptious mussels I had enjoyed on my last visit; but we opted instead for a bowl of comforting lentil soup that warmed us quickly as we savored each hearty bite. Next up we sampled the Eggplant, Tomato and Goat Cheese Gratin served in a ramekin; the bright flavors and creamy mellow layers complemented each other well.

As is always the case with well-made Neapolitan pies, the ingredients make the difference. Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar uses fresh local produce, along with imported meats,



Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar is located on the western edge of Seaside at 2236 East County Hwy 30-A. Hours of operation are 11am to 10pm, seven days a week. Winter months may vary. They can be reached by phone at (850) 231-3113, or you can visit their website at www.budandalley.com.