

PAPER

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FOOD

PALÀ PIZZA ROMANO

198 Allen St., (212) 614-7252 Pizza mania is a condition that should be encouraged. Not content to produce humble pies with tempting toppings, Gigio and Edena Palazzo have gone to extreme lengths to open Palà, an industrial-style parlor on the Lower East Side. They studied pizza-making in Rome and invested in futuristic equipment. For the light, crispy crust they blend up to 14 different flours, let the dough ferment for 48 to 60 hours, calculate ingredients to produce the most beneficial enzymatic reactions and pH levels, and make adjustments according to the weather. Happily, such lunacy results in peerless pizza, especially when layered with pumpkin purée, pancetta and smoked scamorza or field mushrooms, sausage, hot red pepper and really dreamy fior di latte mozzarella. Slices start at \$3 and whole pies are sold by the foot, starting at \$8. Each wood table is adorned with dried bunches of Sicilian oregano and good olive oil to further boost flavor. Pizzerias date back to Pompeii but how many of them offer superior salads (\$7–\$12), savory fried artichokes (\$7), stuffed zucchini blossoms (\$10) and 30 thoughtfully chosen wines from Southern Europe? Light homemade desserts like a custard-cream sponge cake (\$5) are pleasing but it's the pizza that will ignite obsessions. ★
Julie Besonen