

Farina Pizza & Cucina Italiana

By GEOFFREY A. FOWLER

Many Bay Area restaurants like to brag about how much of their food comes from nearby farms. San Francisco's Farina Pizza & Cucina Italiana emphasizes how much of its food travels more than 6,000 miles from Italy.

At Farina Pizza, co-owner Luca Minna imports his La Fiammante tomatoes and Caputo family mill flour from Naples, and his Fior di Latte cheese from Mondragone. He even imported his pizza chefs, Antonio and Gennaro Langella, who are the fourth and fifth generation of a pizza-making family from Naples.

"We wanted to give a noble mission even to the pizza," says Mr. Minna, who also owns the high-end Farina Focaccia & Cucina Italiana restaurant in the Mission neighborhood.

Despite the pedigree of its ingredients, the pizzeria is considerably less expensive than its nearby sibling. Most of the pizzas, which are large enough to share, cost \$15, while salads such as a caprese with buffalo mozzarella and heirloom tomatoes or pan-seared seasonal vegetables cost \$5.

One of the menu's most popular, and unusual, items is a \$5 lightly fried pizza called montanara, which combines the airy texture of a doughnut with the flavors of a traditional pizza. The recipe comes from the communities who live in the mountains outside Naples, says Mr. Minna.

Marcela Wong, who works at tech company in the Mission called CareZone, says her recent meal at the eatery featured the best pizza she has had in the city—particularly the fried pizza. "Everything was well balanced, but it has that extra crunch and fluffiness," she says.

Farina Pizza is located at 700 Valencia St., and is open for lunch daily from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.