

DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

THE WEEKLY GUIDE TO ENTERTAINMENT IN ORANGE COUNTY

Marco Polo has variety of pastas, sauces, pizzas

Marco Polo Italian Eatery in Newport Beach offers a variety of fresh pastas, sauces, gourmet pizzas fired from a wood-burning oven, sandwiches and *calzoni* to choose from.

Restaurant of the week

The owners of Marco Polo include pro football players Doug Smith of the Rams and Jeff Rutledge of the Redskins.

They said they feel moderate pricing sets Marco Polo apart from its competition. Lunches average around \$7 and pastas average \$9. Small 8-inch pizzas range from \$5.95 to \$8.95 while large 14-inch pizzas run from \$10.95 to \$17.50. Dinner specials average \$14.

Newton said that Marco Polo's most requested item is the scamorza chicken, which is grilled chicken breast topped with smoked scamorza cheese, pesto and roasted peppers and served with fresh pasta.

Another popular item is the risotto *di bosco*, which is a rice sautéed with veal, porcini mushrooms, prosciutto and red peppercorns. The bestseller in the pasta category, according to Newton, is the angel *pollo*, which is angel hair pasta sautéed with assorted seafood and finished in a tomato sauce.

Marco Polo also feature pizzas fired in a wood-burning oven. Try the Quattro *formaggi*, pizza topped with a blend of four cheeses – Gorgonzola, ricotta, mozzarella and Romano. Patron can also build their own pizza from a list of fresh toppings.

The desserts are made fresh each day and include such favorites as *tiramisu*, cheesecake, cannoli and vanilla espresso.

The décor at Marco Polo is that of a Tuscan villa. Melvin Fain of Dallas designed the interior to capture the vitality of Tuscany.

A new Marco Polo is expected to open in the Brea Mall this summer.

Marco Polo is located at 1260 Bison Ave. in the Newport North shopping center. For information and reservations, call (949) 721-0801.

- By JOHN CRIST