

THE FEAST



Milestones by Frank Sabatini Jr. 44 minutes ago in Eat

Sammy's Woodfired Pizza Finds a Niche In World Cuisine

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Sammy's Woodfired Pizza

Swooped-up baba ghanoush and a host of other tapas now augment the menu at Sammy's Woodfired Pizza.

In keeping up with the "mood of the country," Sami Ladeki of the ever-expanding [Sammy's Woodfired Pizza](#) has implemented some of the most dramatic menu and operational changes in his company's 22-year history. Gluten-free pizza crusts, internationally-inspired tapas, blunt taste testers and occasional talk of a name change all enter into the new equation. The Feast caught up with Ladeki to learn more about what's cooking lately.

The pizzas: "We recently introduced gluten-free crusts in addition to four others that include whole wheat and thin artisan crusts. There are also new styles of pizzas added to the menu such as Diavalo, Caprese and Tuscan."

The overall menu: "In the early years we started out with about 25 menu items. We now have 90 that include new tapas such as oak-roasted asparagus, Kobe beef skewers with tahini sauce and baba ghanoush. We just keep changing with the mood of the country."

Taste testers: "We use committees of three men and three women at a time for our menu developments. We look for honest answers. If there's someone who always says, 'everything is wonderful,' we take them off the panel."

Menu deletions: "We took mousaka off the menu a couple months ago. It was delicious, but too high in fat and calories for most people."

The restaurant's name, a misnomer?: A lot of people are saying that we're beyond pizza only. And we talk about it all the time: Should we should move the name or not? But we're so well branded with 17 locations, that I just don't have the heart to change it."