

Marco's Pizza is a fresh experience

New pizza restaurant serves up a tasty pie with lots of extras

By Peter Covino,
Entertainment Editor

Before you pick up the phone and order from one of the old stand-by chains for your weekly fix of pizza, you just might want to consider Marco's Pizza.

Marco's already operates several pizza restaurants in Ocala and Florida, but the newest one has just opened at the Super Target Center in Hunter's Creek.

"This is the third Marco's I own," said Glenn Ayra.

Ayra is a New Jersey resident who returned to Florida a few years ago, only to get involved in the pizza business.

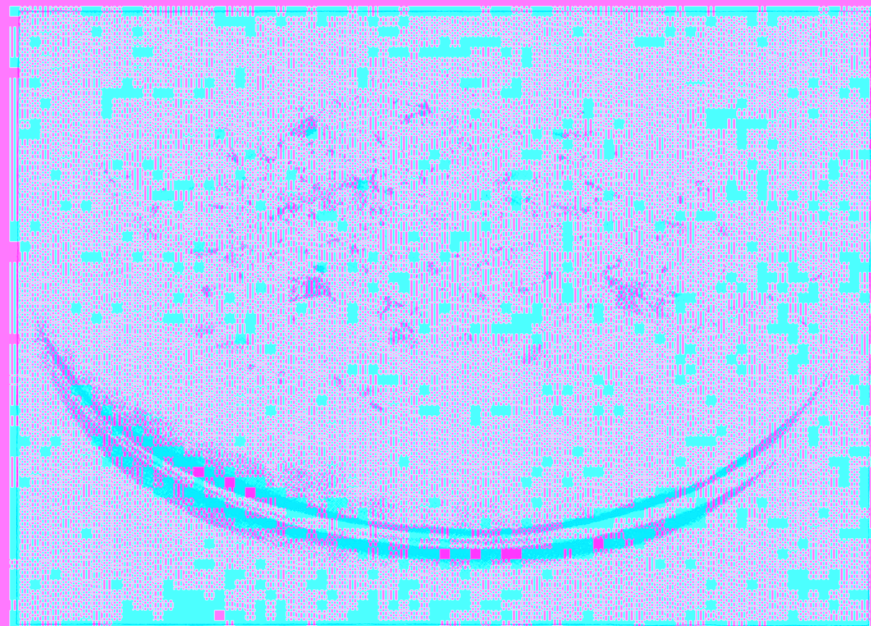
"I missed from New Jersey. I know very good pizza," he said. "Pizzas is a staple in New Jersey. On every corner, there is a pizza and no pizza place, and I knew there was an opening in Florida for good pizza."

"What is unique about Marco's is the product," he said.

Indeed, Marco's is not your average pizza.

"The dough is made fresh each day at each Marco's location. The tomato sauce is also made from vine-ripened tomatoes and the cheese is never frozen and is a blend of three different

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News-Gazette Photo/Andrew Sullivan

The "white-cheesy" specialty pizza is one of several signature varieties at Marco's at the Super Target Center in Hunter's Creek.

Marco's Pizza is now open at the Super Target Center at Hunter's Creek. See story in Lifestyles, page C-1.



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cheeses, he said.

But the proof is in the pizza.

At a visit to the newest Marco's location we tried the white cheezy specialty pizza (four types of cheese including feta, plus bacon, onions, sliced tomatoes and garlic butter

sauce) and the deluxe uno (cheese pepperoni, Italian sausage, mushrooms, green peppers, onions and a sprinkling of extra cheese).

Both were quite tasty, with the deluxe uno getting extra credit just because it looks so great on the table

as well.

Other pizza offerings include the meat supremo (four meats and cheese); chicken fresco (four types of cheese, grilled chicken, bacon, onions, sliced tomatoes); Hawaiian chicken (ham, chicken, bacon,

pineapple, cheese) and garden (four types of cheese, plus mushrooms, black olives, onions, sliced tomatoes).

Patty Johnson is director of operations for all eight Marco's locations in Central Florida, including the three owned by Ajmo.

The hours have been very long, getting the new Hunter's Creek restaurant up an running she said, but the end result has been great. Business is already quite good at the new restaurant.

"We are even getting orders from the Target employees" next door, and there is a Pizza Hut located inside the store, she said.

Pizza sizes at Marco's range from the small (ten inches) to the extra large (16 inches). Regular pizzas are

priced from \$6.99 for the small to \$11.99 for the extra large. Topping are \$1 each to \$2 depending on pizza size.

Specialty pizzas range from \$10.99 for the small to \$18.99 for the extra large.

Pizzas are available in both original classic or crispy thin. Pan-sized are \$1 more.

You also get your choice of pizza crust toppers (garlic butter, parmesan cheese, Roma seasoning or ranch seasoning) at no extra charge.

Other menu offerings include fresh baked subs; chicken wings, Cheezybread, Cinnasquares (a fresh baked pastry topped with cinnamon sugar and a side of vanilla icing); and Chicken Tumblers (boneless chicken with choice of sauce).

All Marco's locations also have a daily lunch special for

\$5.99 with a choice of small one-topping pizza, sub or chicken ranch salad and a fountain soda.

You can get discounts and more by signing up for Marco's email club at marcos.com, Johnson said.

The Hunter's Creek location is open daily Monday-Thursday from 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.-midnight and Sunday 11 a.m.- 11 p.m.

Order online at marcos.com or phone ahead at 407-888-3288.

Marco's Pizza was founded by an Italian immigrant. There are now boasts 215 stores in 16 states and the Bahamas. Based on the number of stores signed into development since 2007, Marcos Pizza is the fastest-growing pizza company in the United States.