

NEWS/BUSINESS



REGION

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is distinct that it is rectangular instead of round and has a thicker crispy crust. The story is that Old Forge pizza began with some hungry coal miners.

"We were a coal region, and we had some coal miners playing cards in somebody's house, and a lady made this pizza using cheese and a certain kind of dough," Revello says. "It became Old Forge pizza."

The pizzas of Old Forge are baked on the same size 12-by-17-inch trays, but each restaurant has its signature combinations and recipe.

"We're not big on toppings. Usually 90-95 percent of the pizzas are served plain," Revello says. "There's the 'Red Pizza' with sauce and cheese on top, and there's the 'White Pizza' with a crust on the bottom, filled with cheese, and (crust) folded over the top."

Revello's uses a three-cheese blend and has been loyal to Kraft since the family opened its restaurant in the 1960s.

"We've used nothing but Kraft cheese over the years," Revello says. "If it's not broken, don't fix it. You can't get better quality and consistency than from Kraft. We look for that in every menu item."

One might expect a competitive atmosphere in Old Forge with all these

pizza restaurants vying for a slice of the customer pie, but Revello says that is not the case.

"What's very unique about the town is the restaurant owners, we're all best friends," he says. "We travel, go out to eat together, and eat in each others' restaurants. There's no competition — we're straight-forward friends."

The concentration of pizza restaurants, many of which have been around even longer than Revello's, has made Old Forge a destination for pizza lovers. People will come into town for the

pizza and then decide where to go. If one place is too busy, they will go to the next place.

"Each place has their own group of people who like their pizza," Revello says. "I always say if there was only one pizza place in Old Forge, it wouldn't survive."

• Connecticut Pizza Explosion

New Haven, Conn., is another East Coast town known for its pizza. Italian immigrant Frank Pepe introduced the city to his Neapolitan-style thin-crust pizza which he would make in the coke-

burning ovens of his bakery and sell from a push cart at markets. He established Connecticut's first pizzeria in 1925.

When they first started, Pepe and his wife Filomena offered two types of pizza: tomatoes with grated cheese, garlic, oregano and olive oil, and another with anchovies.

"My grandfather came up with this combination of putting a pizza together. It was like the big bang, it just happened," says Gary Bimonte, third-generation co-owner of Frank

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Milano's Cheese Corp. receives national recognition from SQFI

LINDEN, N.J. — JVM Sales Corp. d/b/a Milano's Cheese Corp. has recently been awarded the SQF 2000 Level 3 Excellent Certification by the Safe Quality Food Institute (SQFI).

The announcement comes as the company begins an aggressive launch into the retail industry, says Anthony Caliendo, vice president of sales and marketing, Milano's Cheese Corp.

"This is a huge advantage for us in building our brand," Caliendo says. "We are here today because of our CEO Mary Beth Tomasino who is committed to quality and safety and who assembled the team to make this happen."

Milano's Cheese received the SQF Level 2 designation last year and then made the decision to proceed with the

Level 3 certification process. Level 3 is the highest level of certification awarded to manufacturers and distributors by SQFI and is achieved by demonstrating a comprehensive implementation of food safety and quality management systems for more than a year. Through the system, manufacturers and distributors also receive a compliant, food or excellent rating.

"The Level 3 Excellent Certification was important to our company on many different levels," Tomasino says. "More and more retailers are limiting their business transactions to SQFI-certified companies because consumers are increasingly more educated and knowledgeable about food safety and compliance. As a smaller, privately

owned Italian cheese distributor, it was a natural decision to apply for this certification because we are competing for market share with much larger corporations."

Milano's Cheese notes that only 31 cheese companies nationwide have achieved this recognition, and Milano's is the only manufacturer focusing exclusively on grated and shredded Italian hard cheeses to earn the certification, Caliendo says.

"Due to our food safety measures, consistency and competitive price, we are one of the fastest-growing cheese manufacturers in the U.S., and we know that this certification will distinguish us from the competition and assist in our international growth plans." CMN



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Contact: Anthony Caliendo, VP of Sales & Marketing Milano's Cheese Corp., New Jersey, USA
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