



by Mark Rumreich

"When are you going to review Bazbeaux?" is a question I get regularly. Now that the weather is warm, the time has finally come.

Bazbeaux is one of the crown jewels of the Indianapolis pizza scene, famous for its exotic gourmet pizzas, unique ambience and abundant outdoor dining.



In the spring of 1986, Jeff and Debbie Berman opened the original Bazbeaux in an old decrepit house next to the Broad Ripple fire station. It quickly became famous for delectable pizzas served on the rickety decks next to the canal. By the end of the first year the restaurant had earned its first in an unbroken string of "Best Pizza in Indianapolis" awards. Three years later, Bazbeaux opened a second restaurant on Massachusetts Avenue and helped establish the Indianapolis downtown arts district.

In May 2003, 17 years to the day after opening in Broad Ripple, Bazbeaux moved just a few steps away to its current location.

The new location has more seating throughout the inside of the restaurant and large decks for outdoor dining in front of the building and on the rooftop. The front awning lets you enjoy dining al fresco without baking in the sun or getting rained upon.

It's hard for me to contemplate something besides pizza here, but Bazbeaux offers some out of the ordinary sandwiches such as the Muffaletta with Italian meats, provolone and olive relish, and the Popeye with cream cheese, spinach and cucumber dressing

- the editor's favorite. For starters, there are six kinds of salads with homemade dressings available - Debbie is especially proud of the creamy basil dressing she created.

Beer and wine is another area where Bazbeaux excels. The bottled beer selection covers a range from popular domestics to the more serious import and

micro brews, all reasonably priced.

Now the pizza. One look at the list of toppings and specialty pizzas, and you'll know this is no ordinary pizzeria. There are over

Bazbeaux Pizza

811 E. Westfield Blvd
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Lunch Daily 11AM-2PM;
Dinner Daily 4:30PM-11PM
www.bazbeaux.com

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Crossword solution

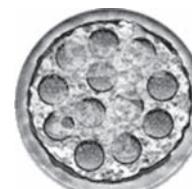
puzzle on Page Nine



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50 toppings to choose from including Andouille sausage, hearts of palm, crab, barbecue shrimp, capers, black bean dip, pine nuts and snow pea pods - need I go on? There are five sauces and seven cheeses beyond the default blend of mozzarella, provolone and Romano. Crust-wise, choose from wheat or white, thin or thicker. Pizzas are served in 10, 12 and 16-inch sizes.

When Bazbeaux first opened, the owners experimented with different flavors: Mexican, Japanese, Thai and Italian. Those ethnic influences are seen in many of the specialty pizzas. The Greek pizza, for instance, features spinach, black olives, red onion and feta cheese. The Mexican is topped with Mexican sausage, avocado, black olives, pepperoncini, red onion, green peppers and cheddar.

We ordered a Bazbeaux Special with fresh basil, garlic and sun-dried tomatoes, a pepperoni with Italian sausage, and the Pizza alla Quattro Formaggio. The Quattro Formaggio is Bazbeaux's most popular pizza, and for good reason - it's a cheese-lover's find. It has Romano, cheddar, mozzarella and dollops of ricotta, plus crisp bacon and fresh mushrooms.

Soon after ordering, our pizzas were delivered to our table. The Quattro Formaggio did not disappoint. Its cheesy terrain changed



from bite-to-bite, and the bacon & mushrooms complemented it well. On all the pizzas, the thin crust was perfect - crisp enough to hold up to the weight of the toppings, golden brown, and bubbly around the outside. The pepperoni and sausage pie had huge hunks of tasty sausage - the way it's supposed to be, and spicy pepperoni. The sauce was fresh-tasting, chunky and abundant and the cheese had the stretchiness of mozzarella with the flavor-boost of provolone. The Bazbeaux Special lacked meat, but was no flavor-wimp.

It's no secret how good Bazbeaux is, so be prepared for a long wait on Friday and Saturday evenings. I'm not telling you anything new, but if you're serious about pizza, you can't do much better than Bazbeaux.

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Mark Rumreich has been vigilantly surveying the pizza scene in the Indianapolis area for over two decades. He is an avid home brewer, has written for several magazines, and is the author of the just-released second edition of the Car Stereo Cookbook.

