

# The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2010

QUICK BITE | MONTCLAIR

## Obsessive About Pizza

Robert Cino does not claim that his pizzeria is the only one in this part of New Jersey that uses a wood-burning oven. But he says that his 1,600-square-foot restaurant Ah'Pizz, which he has been gradually opening with two partners since February, is the only one using it correctly.

"Other people are cooking their pies at 500 degrees," said Mr. Cino, 23, of Scotch Plains. "I cook mine at 1,000 degrees, which gives them that great, smoky flavor."

It also cooks them fast. "It takes me a minute to stretch a pie, then 90 seconds in the oven," said Mr. Cino, who trained and worked in pizzerias in Italy. "That's it."

If there is a downside to such efficiency, it's that Ah'Pizz — pronounced something like "appease" — does not accept phone orders.

"I care about every pie — I'm not going to have them sitting around here losing their taste," Mr. Cino said.

All that caring was apparent

during a recent visit to the rustically decorated restaurant. The pizza was piping hot, crispy and practically greaseless. (A margherita pizza, with mozzarella, basil, tomato sauce, Parmigiano-Reggiano and extra virgin olive oil, is \$11; the Ah'Pizz, with similar ingredients but using mozzarella di bufala and cherry tomatoes, is \$16.) The pies here are small and rather delicate; a hungry person could polish one off.

Mr. Cino's devotion is such that he is reluctant to relinquish the dough: "So far, I've personally stretched every pie that's been made here," he said recently. "There's a guy I'm training, but he has to be perfect. I wish I could shape his hands so they're exactly like mine."

TAMMY LA GORCE

Ah'Pizz, 7 North Willow Street, Montclair; (973) 783-9200 or [ahpizznj.com](http://ahpizznj.com). Open Monday to Wednesday, noon to 3 p.m. and 5 to 9 p.m.; Thursday to Saturday, noon to 10 p.m.; and Sunday, 2 to 8 p.m.