

# Culinary Corner

## PRIMO PIZZA AT PRIMAVERA

by Charles Jenkin  
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When's the last time a restaurant went the extra mile for you? For me, it was the last time I (literally) went a few extra miles for a restaurant.

I was on my way to Matthews' Primavera Pizza, and I thought I knew how to get there. I was wrong. Lost, I called the restaurant from my cell phone. The gentleman who answered – and he was a gentleman – asked me to describe my location. He then told me exactly how to get there and offered to stay on the phone until I arrived. He even volunteered to stand outside so I wouldn't miss the place. And yes, when I arrived, there he was, standing curbside. And no, he had no idea he was speaking with a restaurant critic.

I later learned that this exceptionally service-oriented person was Dardan Fetiu, the son of restaurant owners Nora and Tony Fetiu, who opened Primavera Pizza in February 2007. Before that, they ran Nora's Pizza at Harris Boulevard and Albemarle Road. And before that, Tony spent 20 years in New York City's pizzerias and Italian eateries, perfecting his Italian cooking, including the art of pizza-making.

Primavera Pizza is on the older section of Matthews-Mint Hill Road, west of Independence Boulevard. It's not a fancy place. You won't find white tablecloths or expensive décor. Instead, it's all about the food. The Fetius use the highest-quality ingredients and make just about everything from scratch. You can definitely tell. The food is so good that when I was last there, a man who'd moved from Matthews to Charleston, S.C., stopped in for cheese steaks for himself and his wife before he headed home. He said they're *that* great!

### Tip-top pizza

But before we get to cheese steaks, let me tell you about the restaurant's fabulous pizza, starting with its crust. It's clear that Tony has mastered the technique of making fantastic pizza dough. The flavorful

crust is the perfect thickness and has just the right amount of crunch. It holds the homemade sauce, cheese and toppings without getting soggy. The sauce has that tangy taste I love, and Tony's generous with the cheese and toppings.

The house specialty is the Lasagna Pizza, loaded with mozzarella, ricotta, Parmesan and ground beef. Just as delicious is the Deluxe, with sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms, green peppers and onions. The Stuffed Pizza – another winner – comes with veggies or meat, a carnivore's dream with pepperoni, sausage, ground beef, ham, salami, meatballs and cheese. If you're a fan of white pizzas, get Primavera's version, topped with ricotta, provolone, mozzarella and garlic.

Among the restaurant's signature items are its pizza rolls. I haven't seen these anywhere else, but they're just what you're thinking: pizza toppings rolled up in dough and baked. Choose from Sausage, Peppers & Mozzarella; Broccoli, Ricotta & Mozzarella; Chicken, Mozzarella & Sauce; and Spinach, Ricotta & Mozzarella – or create your own.

### Sandwiches, subs and stuffed calzones

Put simply, Primavera's Gyro Pita is a great sandwich. Just like in New York City, the gyro meat is cooked on a rotisserie, sliced into hearty pieces and packed into a pita. It's topped with lettuce, tomato, onions and a deliciously rich and thick homemade tzatziki sauce.

The burgers, also made on premises, are excellent. For an amazing treat, order the European Burger. Tony hand-makes the bun and bakes it while the burger cooks. The bun is sliced on one side; the burger is inserted and then topped with sautéed mushroom, onions and bacon. This is a unique item that I haven't had anywhere else.

If you're a fan of delicious hot subs – and who isn't – this is the place for you. The Meat Ball Parmigiana, Sausage Parmigiana, Eggplant Parmigiana and Chicken Parmigiana, all served on fluffy, soft rolls, are wonderful. The Philly Cheese Steak

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### Primavera Pizza

★★★★ 1/2 out of five

1319 Matthews-Mint Hill Road, Matthews

Phone: 704-321-0201

Hours: Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m.;

Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Prices: \$4.99-\$25.99

Details: Carryout, delivery, beer and wine

More information: Visit [www.shoppecharlotte.com](http://www.shoppecharlotte.com).

