



## The Secret's In the Crust

### Crust Wood Fired Pizza Opens on Maybank Highway

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By Kathleen Curry, Contributing Writer

Since its arrival a couple months ago in Terrace Plaza on Maybank Highway, Crust Wood-Fired Pizza has set fire to the notion that James Islanders have to make a road trip to enjoy Neapolitan-style pizza in Charleston.

Chef Dusty Chorvat, a native of Richmond, Vir. says he met business partner Steve Watkins in local pizza aficionado circles. Chorvat is an alumni of the Art Institute of Atlanta's Cooking School, and locally, a veteran of EVO, Vespa, and Monza kitchens. Altogether, he has about 20 years experience in the food business. A James Island resident, Chorvat describes himself as a lifelong pizza lover, comically noting he even won a pizza-eating contest at age 9. Years later, when he first tried wood-fired pizza it was a "wow" moment. Now Chorvat gets to make and share this style of pizza with others every day. "I like to know I'm feeding people something that is flavorful, unique, fun to eat, and nutritionally beneficial. It was a long and thoughtful process of developing the bread, so it made sense to call it Crust," he says.

Neapolitan wood-fired pizza is as authentically Italian as it gets. It's very different from American styles many people grew up with. The dough is made with a handful of ingredients, rolled, and left to ferment for hours at a time. Once it's flattened, it's topped with a modest helping of sauce, fresh cheese, herbs, meat, and vegetables. It's baked at 700-800 degrees in a wood-fired oven, scooped out with a paddle, and served piping hot on your plate. It should be noted that wood-fired pizza is best enjoyed "fresh from the fire": Crust's 'delivery' is direct to your table or bar seat, and it wasn't designed to wait in a box. Go ahead and gobble all that freshness up in one sitting. And thanks to the dough's fermentation process, you don't feel bloated or tired afterward.

Chorvat says the Margherita is the iconic pie that all Neapolitan wood-fired pizzerias are judged by. For those that don't know, it's topped with fresh basil, mozzarella, and San Marzano tomato sauce. It shares the red, white, and green colors of the Italian flag, and its name was inspired by Italian royalty. Right now, The Margherita, the vegetarian Butternut, and the shrimp and ham, pesto-based Crustacean are Crust's hottest sellers. Designing your own pizza is also an option.

In case diners want something other than pizza, Crust also offers Gnocchi (potato dumpling) entrees, panini sandwiches, salads, and desserts. Starters include olives, handcut fries, an antipasto plate, and fried risotto balls stuffed with ham and mozzarella (arancini). The children's menu features smaller portion pizza, pasta, and fried chicken. Specials are announced online on Facebook.

Chorvat says each wine and beer offering was hand-selected to compliment the wood-fired notes, aggressive flavors, and subtle nuances of the pizzas. Eating at Crust is meant to be the whole package — enjoying a delicious freshly prepared meal with a glass of beer or wine, a silenced phone, being in the moment with the people around you. 'It doesn't get more authentically Italian than that, now does it?

**Crust Wood Fired Pizza is located at 1956 Maybank Hwy., near Zia Taqueria and The Terrace Theater. For more information call (843) 762-5500 or see [www.facebook.com/pages/Crust-Wood-Fired-Pizza/](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Crust-Wood-Fired-Pizza/).**