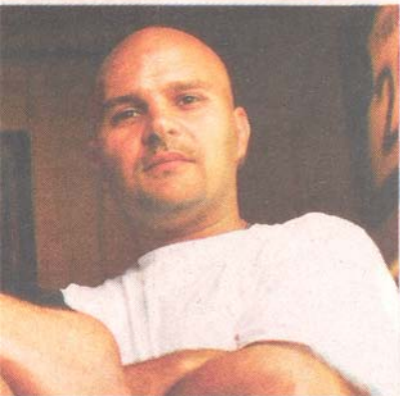


CHEF DU JOUR



Photo/Josh Ritchie

Michelangelo Mozzicato

Visit with the chef at Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza restaurants in Broward and Palm Beach counties and discover the secret to his success. **Page 12.**

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Photo/Josh Ritchie

Michelangelo Mozzicato

Title: Chef at Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza with locations in Fort Lauderdale, Weston, Plantation, Aventura, Pompano Beach, Coral Springs and Palm Beach Gardens; anthonyiscoalfiredpizza.com

Age: 35

Years in current restaurant: Opened the original Fort Lau-

derdale location in 2002.

Type of food prepared there: Pizza, chicken wings, salad

Q. What was your favorite food as a child?

A. Pizza. I would have to go with pizza. This is a business you don't get into for the success or the money involved. You have to have a passion for something to be successful. The guy who flies to the moon didn't decide to become an astronaut in his mid-20s. I'm sure when he was a little kid he had a shuttle toy or an airplane trying to fly. If you do it for the money, you're not going to be successful. You're going to end up hating it.

Q. How did you get started?

A. I used to be a waiter eight years [at Anthony's Runway 84, 330 State Road 84, Fort Lauderdale] and used to make pizzas on my day off for the staff. They used to feed us pasta, and we got sick and tired of eating pasta. So, I used to make pizzas for the guys

and that's how everything started. [Owner] Anthony [Bruno] liked it and, sure enough, he told me: 'Let's find a place and open a pizzeria and give it a shot.'

It turned out to be a place people really love. I mean, I really love it myself, too. I've been here five years and if I don't have a full slice, I at least have a taste of the pizza every day.

Q. Do you get a chance to eat out much other than at your restaurants?

A. Believe it or not, when I do have a chance, I like to go to a pizzeria. . . . When I go out of state, the first thing I do is look for a pizza parlor. Let me see some pizza and compare.

Q. You mostly serve pizza and chicken wings. Why do Americans love pizza and chicken wings so much?

A. The chicken wings have been a big hit for us because they're not unhealthy. We have roasted chicken wings like your grandma used to make, not too crazy with ingredients. We just put it in the oven and let it cook. We don't have any breading or deep frying or butter sauces.

The pizza has been such a main item, like the burger and hot dog, and we try to make it better than what it was. We're sick and tired of hearing people say it's better in New York because of the water. Like we don't have good water down here. I'm gonna prove to you it's not the water.

This is the real thing. We have people from New York and Italy who congratulate me and say this is a good pizza. So whoever says, 'Our pizzeria is good because we bring the water from New York,' it's just

a psychological thing that people use. It's the way you cook it. The coal makes a big difference.

Q. What is it about coal that you like?

A. It's like cooking a piece of steak on a grill or cooking in the house, when it's pan-fried. The flavors are totally different. Since a coal oven is hotter, it cooks the wings and pizza faster. The difference between coal and wood is the coal maintains the heat throughout the day without having to do anything to it. Meanwhile, with the wood, the temperature fluctuates. It goes up and down. You have to be more careful.

Q. Outside of ingredients, is the coal oven the secret to your success?

A. Pretty much 75 percent of our flavor comes from the oven. We try to cook the same wings at the house or in a different oven and you can't accomplish that taste and the texture.

Q. What would you eat for your last supper? The wings or the pizza?

A. I would have to have both of them with the salad. That would be it. All three of them. You can't have one without the other. You can't say they don't go together. They do go together.

— JEFF RUSNAK