

VEGAS RATED

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO LAS VEGAS

1 DISCOVER

\$40 cheese? Penn Jillette and others reveal what's inside their refrigerators

2 PLAY

Three star chefs give new meaning to the phrase dinner party

3 MINGLES

Outrageous aquariums: Meet the guys from Animal Planet's new hit *Tanked*

TABLE FOR TWO

THE FOOD & THE MOOD INSIDE THE CITY'S BEST RESTAURANTS



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SLICE OF LIFE

→ AT LONG LAST, LAS VEGAS HAS BECOME **A PIZZA PARADISE**.
HERE ARE **SIX PIES** YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

BY GRACE BASCOS / PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANTHONY MAIR

Over the past 15 years, Las Vegas' culinary reputation has shifted from home of the all-you-can-eat buffet to home of the five-star, celebrity-chef-helmed restaurant. But in morphing into an epicurean wonderland, there was one food genre that Sin City struggled to perfect: pizza. That's all changing, though, thanks to an influx of authentic Italian eateries that now serve up pies that would pass taste tests from New York to Naples. Sausage and pepperoni, step aside. Las Vegas is home to big-boy pizza now.

1 Rao's

BROCCOLI RABE + SAUSAGE + RICOTTA CHEESE PIZZA (\$14):

Diners who want to give the pizza at Rao's a try will have to plan ahead. That's because Rao's only serves pizza during lunch ... and they're only open for lunch Wednesday through Sunday. But if that fits your schedule, go ahead and dive into the broccoli rabe pizza with ricotta. If you're feeling saucy, add Italian sausage to it for a whole new flavor dimension. Caesars Palace. 702.731.7110; facebook.com/raosrestaurant

2 Wolfgang Puck Pizzeria & Cucina

YUKON GOLD POTATO PIZZA (\$15): Wolfgang Puck is a known master of the nontraditional pizza, and that reputation is on full display with this creation. Paper-thin slices of Yukon gold potatoes are layered with the most succulent of cured pork, guanciale, on a bed of creamy mascarpone cheese. Fresh rosemary adds an herbaceous and earthy quality to each bite. Crystals at CityCenter. 702.238.1000; wolfgangpuck.com

3 Settebello

MARGHERITA PIZZA (\$10): Settebello can be credited with establishing the first true Neapolitan-style pizzeria in the Las Vegas Valley. Owner Brad Otton learned the trade himself in Naples after falling in love with the pizza during his mission to Italy. The Margherita—topped simply with crushed tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, basil, Parmigiano Reggiano and extra virgin olive oil—is as classic as it gets. 140 Green Valley Pkwy., Henderson. 702.222.3556; settebello.net

4 Due Forni

BIANCA PIZZA (NEAPOLITAN-STYLE, \$14.95): As the name suggests, there are two ovens firing two different types of pizzas here: the cracker-like crust of Roman-style pie, and this softer, chewier-crust Neapolitan pizza. This oven heats up to around 900 degrees to cook the Bianca al Prosciutto Cotto, which is topped with prosciutto, fontina cheese, caramelized onions, oregano and aged balsamic. Total cooking time? About 90 seconds. 3555 Town Center Dr., Suite 105. 702.586.6500; dueforni.com

5 Stratta

MEATBALL PIZZA (\$17.50): The wood-fired oven at Stratta is constantly stoked, as the pizzas here are perfect for the pre- and post-theater crowds at Wynn Las Vegas. Diners with hearty appetites should consider the meatball pizza. The house-made meatballs are a mixture of beef, veal and pork, and sliced before being placed on the pizza so that their flavor blends with the sweet tomato sauce and mild Bel Paese cheese. Wynn Las Vegas. 702.770.3463; wynnlasvegas.com

6 D.O.C.G.

D.O.C.G. PIZZA (\$18): This namesake pie is the ultimate in white pizzas. Creamy fonduta, a sauce made of fontina cheese, begins as the base, then a poached egg is cracked right at the table, its silky contents poured over the entire pie. Finished with shaved truffles whispering their musky scent, this pizza is a heavenly sensory overload. The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas. 702.698.7000; cosmopolitanlasvegas.com





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PLACES TO SAVOR SWINE

From pork cheek to pork butt, Vegas offers plenty of opportunities to pig out **BY GRACE BASCOS**

Porchetta from Table 10 at The Palazzo



★ **B&B RISTORANTE**
The Venetian

Guanciale is the Italian treatment of pork cheek, cured to intensify its pork flavor. B&B's Bucatini all 'Amatriciana' (\$25) pairs it with fresh, hollow spaghetti and a spicy tomato sauce. 702.266.9977; bandbristorante.com

★ **RAKU**
5030 W. Spring Mountain Road

Grilled over Raku's special Japanese lump charcoal, the skewer of Kurobuta pork cheek (\$3.50) is crispy, fatty, sweet and smoky all at once. 702.367.3511; raku-grill.com

★ **OKADA**
Wynn Las Vegas

Short ribs do well after a five-hour braise in a mixture of soy, mirin, garlic, ginger

and other spices. Okada's braised Kurobuta pork short rib Kakuni (\$16) presents the fork-tender meat in a clay pot with the braising liquid. 702.248.3463; wynnlasvegas.com

★ **COMME ÇA**
The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas

Pork trim and fat often end up as forcemeat, and pâté de Campagne (\$20) is one of those happy endings. 702.698.7910; commecarestaurant.com

★ **MOZEN BISTRO**
Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas

MOzen offers pork collar as one of its Bento options. The collar is grilled and served with a cooling green papaya slaw. 888.891.9367; mandarinoriental.com/lasvegas

★ **RAO'S**
Caesars Palace

The bone-in, double-cut pork chop (\$32) is thick, juicy and well-seasoned, and the accompanying sauce made of the reduced juice of vinegared hot and sweet cherry peppers adds great tang and heat. 877.346.4642; caesarspalace.com

★ **BORDER GRILL**
Mandalay Bay

Yucatan Pork (\$24) is pork butt (actually, just the pig's shoulder) that's slow-cooked for four hours then wrapped in banana leaves. Try it once and you'll come back again. 702.632.7403; bordergrill.com

★ **SOCIAL HOUSE**
Crystals at City Center

Social House has taken traditional Filipino pata (\$24) and refined it. Pork shank is fried so that the skin gets bubbly and crispy, while the meat remains tender on the inside. 702.736.1122; socialhouselv.com

★ **TABLE 10**
The Palazzo

This Emeril Lagasse eatery gives us porchetta (\$33), which turns slowly in the restaurant's rotisserie. The pig is deboned, re-stuffed and then roasted until the skin is crispy. Yep, Emeril knows his pork! 702.607.6363; palazzo.com



BOTTOM'S UP

Pig and pinot noir—the perfect match

Master sommelier William Sherer knows his way around both the wine and the swine. His vino of choice for pork dishes: pinot noir. There's even an annual festival in honor of this pairing every year in Healdsburg, Calif., hosted by Chef Charlie Palmer. As Palmer's wine director at Aureole, Sherer participates in Pigs & Pinot and knows why the two work so well together. "Both pork and pinot are soft and juicy, and both have a silky texture," he says. "Pork is a fine-grained meat, and pinots are a fine-tannin wine. Pinot has a soft, luscious, cherry fruit, and pork is a lush, sweet meat."

Palmer himself has always been a lover of pork, Sherer says. "And he loves using the whole animal—tail to snout."

What lies between the tail and snout is what lends itself to pinots such as Sherer's recommendation of 2008 Antica Terra from Willamette Valley, Oregon, or 2009 Rochioli from the Russian River area of California. Enjoy both at Aureole at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino.

702.632.7401; charliepalmer.com