

意味深长



A Good Dough

I doubt there's such a thing as a pizza connoisseur as a profession, but there's no denying that when it comes to personal preferences, pizza can be tailored down to the finest detail, much like a fine Italian suit. From deep dish versions in America, to cracker-like bases right here in Singapore to frozen pizza dinners in supermarket aisles, it's hard to believe that pizza has its roots in the poor man's diet.

Chef Anna Borrasi, Singapore's sole Italian female head chef and responsible for the kitchen at ETNA, tells me, "Pizza is the bread of poor people. We grew up on it. We didn't have enough money for meat or even vegetables; just flour and water to make the pizza dough. In Napoli, where I'm from, the most famous pizza is the margherita. Tomato and basil is cheap as it's grown everywhere in Napoli, and I love my pizzas simple." We discover that different regions in Italy have their own version of pizza, with some focusing on a crispier crust while others are all about how thin the dough should be.

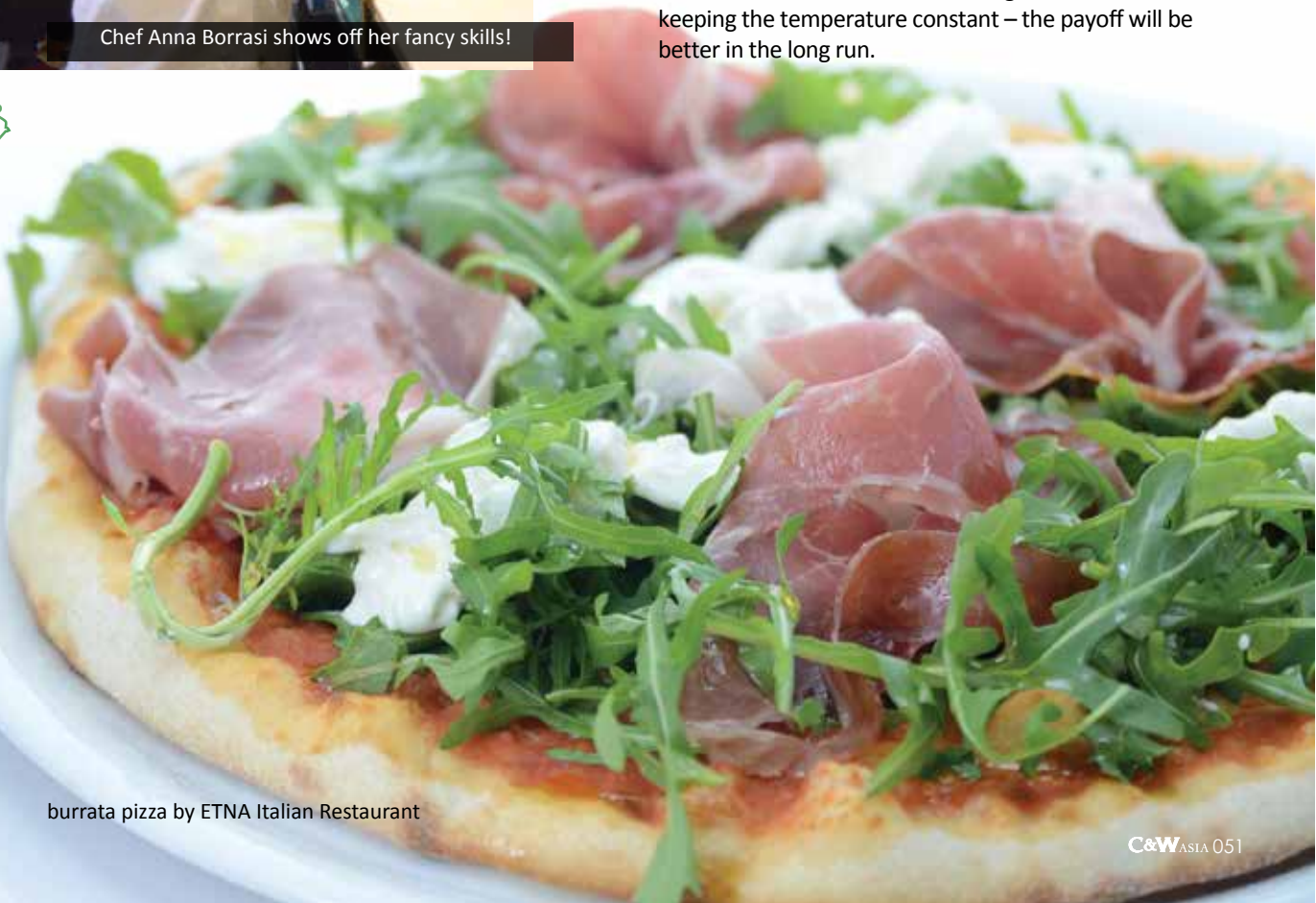


Wood-fired Oven Versus Electric Oven

The prevalence of wood-fired ovens today are far and few, or at least much lesser than in the 19th century when these ovens were used for all purposes of baking. There are plenty of technical considerations to take note of when baking with a wood-fired oven, including how the heat is distributed within the confined space. In fact, the front entrance should ideally be approximately sixty-three percent the height of the top of the oven ceiling; too high and heat is lost, too low and the oven does not heat completely. Chef Borrasi shares with me her disappointment in Europe in its attempt to ban wood-fired ovens due to the increased risk of cancer with its presence of high amount of carbon. "I've met people who've lived till a hundred years old and been eating wood-fired oven pizzas all their lives, and are still around today. Then you have the younger generation who try to eat healthy, and they still die young." She very much believes that the resulting pizza from a wood-fired oven is tastier, whereas electric ovens only allow chefs to add herbs to enhance the taste. The type of wood also affects the pizza crust, with it being crispier and smokier. As wood-fired ovens can reach extremely high temperatures, chefs are able to churn out pizzas every two to three minutes, as opposed to every ten minutes with an electric oven. In spite of the arduous process of getting the fire going in a wood-fired oven – from collecting the wood to keeping the temperature constant – the payoff will be better in the long run.



Chef Anna Borrasi shows off her fancy skills!



burrata pizza by ETNA Italian Restaurant