

CommackPatch

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Commack Heats Up with Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza

Restaurant sees busy opening day at its new location in the Peppertree Commons.

Commack was red hot Wednesday as Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza started up its ovens for opening day.

Tables were full with hungry lunch crowds as locals enjoyed the restaurant's signature "well done" pizzas, oven-baked chicken wings and other menu items.

Rob Alster, who had been a fan of the chain's Woodbury location, brought his friends along to check out the new Commack site. He gave the pizza two thumbs up in between bites.



Another popular menu item is the "sidechick chicken wings." "No one does it like we do," Chuck Locke, vice president of operations for the Florida-based chain said.

"The wings are delicious," Susan Mirman, who came for lunch with friends, said. "The service is excellent too."

There are about 10 pizzerias in Commack already, but Locke said that the restaurant doesn't feel the competition because its products are made much differently.

"We use all coal. There's no gas ovens. Ours has that charred taste you can't get anywhere else," he said.

The restaurant also stands out for its high-end ingredients. Locke said that owner Anthony Bruno, a Long Island native, interviewed 15 tomato vendors from Italy and chose the best one to purchase their crop from for the entire year and have shipped over.

The food's authenticity is a key factor in the chain's success on Long Island, as the area's Italian population has helped the restaurant become a local favorite wherever it builds. "These people know good food," Locke said. The restaurant has also come to fruition due to the resident snowbirds who became fans of the chain while visiting its original Florida locations.

The Commack site is the restaurant's fourth location. Bruno plans to open three more on Long Island within the next year.

"It's exciting for our customers because now they don't have to drive to Woodbury for dinner anymore," Locke said.

The opening has also given job seekers a leg up in the employment field. Locke said that there are currently 60 workers at the Commack location.

With few pubs in the area, the eatery's full bar is another draw to the restaurant. Drink specials include \$5 martini and meatball nights on Wednesdays, starting at 5 p.m., and half-off draft beer on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The restaurant also features a smaller, separate room for private parties.

Prices at the restaurant are reasonable, with lunch size pizzas for \$7.50. The dinner menu features a 1-foot small pie for \$16.95 and a 16-inch pie for \$19.95.

Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza is planning to have its grand opening in about four weeks, in which it will team up with a local charity for the day to give back to the community.

The company recently donated more than \$8,000 from its Wantagh opening on Jan. 15, to Island Harvest's Hurricane Sandy Relief efforts.