

FOOD & WINE

JUNE 2009

At Joey's in Miami, crisp-crustured pies have toppings like Gorgonzola and arugula.



WHERE TO GO NEXT

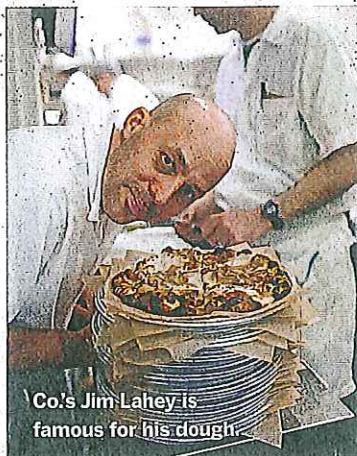
new pizza artisans

Chefs and bakers are transforming pizza from greasy pies in cardboard boxes to Slow Food-worthy creations with crackly, charred crusts and ingredients directly from the farmers' markets.

co., new york city

Jim Lahey is one of the country's elite bread bakers, so when he decided to open a pizza place, it was huge news. The Sullivan Street Bakery founder had his eureka moment while doing a flatbread demo on a truck at a farmers' market. More than three years later, he launched Co. (a.k.a. Company). Toppings are remarkable, like the fresh spinach on the three-cheese Popeye—a favorite of chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten's, one of Co.'s owners.

But what people can't stop talking about is the crust: Made with Lahey's famous no-knead dough, it's both chewy and crisp, and ever-so-slightly tangy. "I love the restraint of pizza," Lahey says. "It's haute but still has street-foodness." 230 Ninth Ave.; 212-243-1105. —Kate Krader



Co.'s Jim Lahey is famous for his dough.

Great Lake, Chicago

It would be so easy to miss Great Lake. It doesn't have a website. Its hours are erratic. It seats 14 at most. Peer into the window of the tiny storefront restaurant in Edgewater, and the place looks more like a shop, selling items like Amish popcorn. The spot is run by husband-and-wife Detroit natives Nick Lessins and Lydia Esparza; Lessins assembles pies to order and then masterfully chars them in his beloved gas oven,

which is cranked up to 650°. Some toppings are baked onto the ethereally crisp crust; others—like the Mozzarella cheese on the spinach pie—are added when the pizza is just out of the oven. 1477 W. Balmoral Ave.; 773-334-9270. —Tina Ujlaki

exceptional pizza, plus pasta & more

City House, Nashville Try the Margherita pie. 1222 Fourth Ave. N.; 615-736-5838. **Gjelina, Venice, CA** A Cal-Ital place with great lamb-sausage pizza. 1429 Abbot Kinney Blvd.; 310-450-1429. **Joey's, Miami** A new modern-Italian restaurant. 2506 NW Second Ave.; 305-438-0488.