

# FROM PUCCINI TO PIZZA

## LOCAL TENOR EXPLORING HIS PIE-MAKING PROWESS

**BRYAN MYERS**

bmyers@metroland.com

A "Canada's Got Talent" finalist from Georgetown has discovered singing isn't his only talent.

Emilio Fina, an opera singer, discovered a passion for another Italian export: pizza. With fewer singing engagements during the pandemic, the tenor started making pizza from scratch.

Starting with store-bought dough, he quickly began preparing his own.

"I just wanted to get better and better," Fina said.

Though 2020 was the first time he'd made pizza, Fina said he knew exactly the pie he was trying to create.

"I was in Italy in 2016, eating a Neapolitan pizza in Pompeii," Fina said. "The taste was out of this world, and it was just the simplest thing: a margherita pizza with

just a few olives."

Where possible, Fina has strived to adhere to the guidelines set out by the Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana (The True Neapolitan Pizza Association), a Naples-based organization that projects and promotes the style of pizza worldwide. However, to earn the title, pizzas must be cooked in a wood-fired oven, while Fina's are cooked in an Ooni pizza oven. Fina said he's also been able to connect with pizzaiolos around the world for advice and guidance, including the 2014 world pizza champion, Johnny di Francesco and Pasquale Ponticciello, both members of the AVPN.

The tipping point for Fina's pizza came through social media.

"I joined the Georgetown Facebook group in order to get a rototiller for my backyard," Fina said.

Fina posted looking to borrow a rototiller for a couple of hours in

exchange for a few homemade pizzas. He received 96 responses.

Looking to accelerate the learning curve, Fina said he makes pizza in larger patches.

"I'm learning, it's like school for me," he said. "I make mistakes, some pizzas I've given to friends have holes in them."

On New Year's Eve, Fina baked 64 pizzas for friends and family in the community.

"They were gone in 30 minutes," he said, "but it was labour-intensive."

Though Fina's pies have been a success, he's not in it for profit — at least not yet.

"I'm not making money doing this," he said. "I'm learning."

In the future, Fina said he wouldn't rule out his own pizzeria.

"If all I ever do is make pizza for my family, I'm good with that," Fina said.

Now, Fina has found a way to combine singing with pizza.



Bryan Myers/Metroland

Emilio Fina, an opera singer turned part-time pizzaiolo, has been perfecting the art of Neapolitan pizza in his backyard.

While his upcoming Valentine's Concert shows at the Norval United Church (14015 Danby Rd.) have been postponed until March 26

and 27, each \$25 ticket is also a voucher for a free margherita pizza. Tickets are available by calling 647-973-2175.



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