



## Donna Margherita. An Italian Home in New York City

Tommaso Cartia (July 20, 2017)



Opened on Manhattan's Upper East Side, Donna Margherita serves Italian cuisine in an environment that is just as authentic as the food.

Two blocks from the 2nd Avenue Subway's 72nd Street station is Manhattan's latest Italian dining gem, Donna Margherita. Inside this inviting space, the walls are covered with daisies and a classic Vespa sits above the entryway. Up the spiral staircase you'll find an intimate dining balcony. The restaurant's cozy interior is complemented by today's best Italian music playing in the background. But setting is only one component of the great dining experience at Donna Margherita.

### **A Great Team**



At the opening night party, guests got to meet the people who make Donna Margherita possible. Executive Chef [Rosanna Di Michele](#) [2] of Abruzzo and owners **Pino Manica** and **Lucia Barletta** showed some of their aces in the hole, treating guests to simple yet delicious crostone rustico, a killer eggplant parmesan and a mouthwatering lasagna with ragù.

One of the night's biggest hits was the pizza. If you've never been to visit Italy and are wondering what pizza tastes like in the motherland, Donna Margherita will satisfy your curiosity. Delicious, authentic pizzas are cooked in the oven behind the front counter. Napoli-lovers will be pleased to know the oven is handcrafted by Naples' own [Marra Forni](#) [3].

As with any good pizzeria, Donna Margherita offers a wide selection, including children's pizzas. How did such an authentically Italian joint find itself on Second Avenue?

## **The Beginnings**

Before becoming Donna Margherita the space originally housed Golosi Second Avenue, a gelateria & pizzeria owned by Lucia Barletta and Pino Manica. "We're from Calabria," explains Lucia, "and came to New York many years ago. In the '70s, my father opened his first restaurant in Calabria. Then he opened another in New York. Eventually we opened eight restaurants in the City. We've since sold them. The last one was Trattoria Dopo Teatro in Times Square, but we had others such as Buon Appetito, Cascina, Zanzibar, Cascina Downtown, Golosi Park Avenue, and Golosi Second Avenue, which subsequently became Donna Margherita."

Originally, Lucia and Pino Manica planned to turn the place into a full-fledged pizzeria. Then they met Rosanna. "Meeting Rosanna changed things a bit," says Lucia. "Upon becoming familiar with her cooking, I started to see that I could offer more. There are so many Italian restaurants in New York, but it always seems like something is missing. You find good pizza, but the pasta isn't cooked the way it should be. Or vice versa. I believe in Rosanna and her way of preparing Italian food. It can be difficult to find original dishes that can only be had in Italian households, and that's what Rosanna's cooking is."

## **Home Cooking**

For Rosanna, meeting Lucia and Pino felt like fate. Even the name "Margherita"—one of her daughter's names—was a good omen! Family is a great inspiration for Rosanna, whose passion for cooking was passed down to her from her parents. She's able to conserve the tastes of Italy thanks to her use of the freshest ingredients and following the antique recipes she has been learning to cook in Abruzzo since she was a little girl. There's a special alchemy between Rosanna and the food she cooks, a mysterious magic that makes you taste the dishes exactly as you would savour them in Italy, at Rosanna's home in Vasto.

Rosanna shared her enthusiasm with us and also revealed the secret behind her cooking: "My secret is love," she told us, "a true love for my land. That's what I share here at Donna Margherita. Here, I am able to give some space to the notions about cooking that I brought with me since I was young."

So if you're looking to feel as if you're in a true Italian household, come on down (or up) to Donna Margherita! The owners, the chef, and the staff will make sure that your dining experience is absolutely delectable.

Information:

[Donna Margherita](#) [4]

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[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/rosannadonnamargheritajpg>

[2] <http://www.cookingwithrosanna.com>

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