

Vesta: Hearth. Home. Family. Fire.

By Emily Mangini



Hearth. Home. Family. Fire. These are the symbols of Vesta, Greek goddess. But in Redwood City Vesta is more than a mythological figure. Vesta is the wood-fired pizza and small plates restaurant that has taken the town by storm.

But Vesta, which opened on Broadway in 2012, almost didn't happen; at least not in Redwood City. "My dad told us not to open in Redwood City," explains Peter Borrone, 41, who owns Vesta with his wife, Courtney, 30. "Dad" is Roy Borrone, who in 1979 and with his wife, Rose, opened Cafe Borrone in the same spot where Vesta stands. But the Redwood City of yesteryear is not the Redwood City of today, and Cafe Borrone relocated to Menlo Park in 1989. "He didn't think people would come to Redwood City for pizza. He wanted us to open in Palo Alto or San Carlos," says Peter. But Peter and Courtney, both Redwood City natives, were adamant: This is their home, and the perfect location for Vesta.

"I love the charm of Redwood City," explains Courtney, "We just knew we wanted to be down here." And Peter agrees, "This is home. I love that Redwood City has people from both ends of the spectrum — we've got a little bit of grit, and a little bit of nice all at the same time." Unbeknownst at the time, Vesta, and Peter and Courtney's faith in Redwood City, would be a part of what we now know to be Red-



Courtney and Peter Borrone

wood City's Renaissance. With restaurants like Vesta, Redwood City officially has a food scene. And a good one, too.

"Our inspiration for Vesta came from wanting to open a restaurant with food that we like, and ingredients that we like to use," shared Courtney. Part of what Courtney and Peter enjoy is "clean" food. Peter explains: "We want people to feel good after they eat our food. We believe that using fresh, organic and local ingredients wherever possible is the key." But Peter is quick to add that they don't want to step on the organic soap box. The only reference to the ingredients used is an unassuming note at the bottom of the handwritten menu.

Vesta's menu was created entirely by Peter and Courtney, who spent a year and a half developing their recipes. The hard work paid off, with each pizza and small plate a standout in its own right. The pizzas are artisanal and unique without be-

ing pretentious. While there is no "meat lovers delight" on this menu, there are plenty of options to satisfy the ravenous carnivore. The crowd favorite pizza is the Sausage and Honey, which is both spicy and sweet. But there is also the Sopressata, Spinach and Ham, and a sprinkling of bacon throughout the menu. Vesta has even kicked it up a notch with its olives, trading in the typical black variety for castelvetranos, showcased by the Green Olive pizza. And then there's the burrata. If ever there was a reason to celebrate Vesta, it's that it brought burrata to Redwood City. Burrata, mozzarella's creamy sibling, is dotted throughout the menu. Found on pizzas and small plates alike, this is just one example where quality ingredients are the stars of the show at Vesta.

Vesta singlehandedly encapsulates Redwood City — where it has been and where it is going. When asked how dad now feels about Vesta's location, Peter says with a chuckle, "Oh he loves it. He loves coming down here. I keep asking if he will sell the building to me, but he says no, he likes being a part of this." And having dad close by is just fine by Peter and Courtney. "That's just it," Courtney explains with a smile, "Hearth, family, home and fire. It's really what we're all about." **C**

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