



# T Pizza Toscana

**Pizza Toscana ([www.pizzatoscana.co.uk](http://www.pizzatoscana.co.uk)) has now debuted successfully in the heart of London's Wardour Street, where it has become part of the changing face of China Town.**

## TUSCAN INFLUENCE

Pizza Toscana occupies the site of a former Biaggio and La Scala restaurants, both of which were very popular with their regular customers over a considerable number of years.

This location has long been associated with Italian food and even to this day, past customers return expecting to see their favourite Italian restaurant from times gone by. Still maintaining an Italian theme, however, the restaurant's particular emphasis has now shifted to focus on Tuscan pizza and the premium Tuscan ingredients being used to make it.

The man behind the new launch - Italian restaurateur Stefano Cresci (owner of La Bussola, which claims to be Florence's most historical and oldest restaurant since 1960) - feels that he was one of the first to realise that high quality pizza would become one of Italy's preferred restaurant dishes, and so with positive feedback and encouragement from Italians and British people already enjoying the pizza being served in Florence (the UK consulate being close to the restaurant in Florence), he set about planning a UK launch. Born in the heart



of Florence, Italy, this idea has now become a brand and there are plans for a second central London opening this year.

With a menu already reflecting Tuscany's rich heritage and quality produce, Pizza Toscana's inspiration - the pizza being served at La Bussola in Florence - was never just a quickly prepared dish, needless to say, but rather a dish given just the same care and attention as any other menu item on the prestigious restaurant's menu, they report.

Evolving the idea of quality pizza and using exclusively Tuscan ingredients - namely pecorino cheese instead of mozzarella and chopped Costoluto Fiorentino tomatoes (with no waste/seeds, but all flesh) instead of passata as the base for other Tuscan toppings, and extra virgin Tuscan olive oil - Stefano Cresci started to experiment and created a core of five pizzas which could be described as 100% Tuscan, and thus a real 'pizza Toscana' was created.





**Fresh ribbed Costoluto Fiorentino tomato.**

**LONDON CALLING**

Having an international outlook, Stefano Cresci realised that the time was right for his creation to make itself known in the UK market and, with help from Federico Fiorentini of BRD Consulting ([www.brdconsulting.it](http://www.brdconsulting.it)), he set out to find a suitable restaurant which had similar values to La Bussola in Florence.

BRD Consulting is a management consulting firm specialising in the development of sales networks, direct or franchise, and the provision of high quality consulting services for the retail and franchise sector in the business fields such as location, format, technology and finance, both directly and through alliances (BRD's Federico Fiorentini having already been involved in the franchise success of brands such as Pizza Rossa, for example).

They found the La Scala premises in Wardour Street, London. Family-owned and run for many years, and serving traditional, high quality Italian food, the restaurant which had been popular with customers for generations has now successfully been rebranded Pizza Toscana with input from BRD Consulting.

Upon launch, the new menu centred on the five pizzas to be found in La Bussola, having now gone on to offer far more, as well as starters, mains and desserts – all made using the best Tuscan ingredients. The wine list features iconic Tuscan wines such as Brunello and Sassicaia among others, as well as craft Tuscan beers.

"I couldn't have wished for a better location to start in London, this is a high footfall area which is busy almost 24/7," said Stefano Cresci. "The excellent mix of business, tourist and some residential customers makes it ideal for this new and exciting venture."

**TUSCAN FEEL**

With 92 seats spread over three floors, upon visiting it is soon clear that in a simple but stylish way with clean lines, Pizza Toscana embraces all that is traditionally Tuscan – from the wood burning oven made by specialist firm Valoriani, to the chestnut tree table tops that have been crafted by artisans in the Chianti area.



The ground floor opened in advance of the two upper floors (which have been gradually converted to the new style décor to provide event and socialising areas), and therefore meaning that importantly in today's competitive times the new business was able to make a head start by serving a core menu of pizzas at ground level – something which the international franchising consultant, Federico Fiorentini, says he often prefers to do, as it allows for modification and feedback as the new launch takes shape and develops.



Even the placing of the ingredients follow a specific order; namely the cheese followed by a thin layer of tomato, then any other required toppings and finally some Tuscan olive oil. Each pizza has its own 'recipe' and process, and so there are different cooking times too, with each pizza type requiring care and attention, and taking a different amount of time to cook.

Known to this day as Pizza No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, these typical and, claim the restaurant, unmatched creations, practically became an overnight success in the Florence restaurant, and not just with the locals, but with an international clientele, and so Stefano Cresci was often asked when he would be bringing the idea to London, where high quality pizza has already established a strong niche for itself.





# PROFILE

The overall effect is a style which is rustic and elegant, reflecting a mix of modern and traditional Tuscany, all enhanced by a series of photos depicting Tuscan life and scenery from the 1920's to present day that have been sourced from Florence's historical archives of Foto Locchi. The chairs are based on the classic 1950s chair to be found in many Tuscan kitchens (also known as the 'chair of the osteria').

## THE PIZZA

Pizza Toscana's pizza is characterised by being crispy and light due in no small part to the quality of the flour used, the time it is allowed to rest and the yeast used; in turn meaning that it is also better for the digestion. Their two *pizzaioli* went over to Tuscany to train, just as staff from the restaurant in Tuscany came over to see and experience the London site.

Since the launch, their range of pizzas have broadened with prices ranging from £7.50 (Marinara) to £14.90 (Bresaola), but having assessed the pricing of pizza locally, then taken into consideration their Tuscan credentials and point of differentiation in terms of the premium nature of their ingredients, they understandably feel that they have pitched their pricing accordingly (the pizza-serving Sartori and stylish Princi being not too far away, for example).

To help them bring their Tuscan pizzas to market in the UK, Pizza Toscana can boast a close collaboration with the Tuscan ingredient supplier, Vinci Food and Wine Ltd, also based in London. For the supplier, this has been a new project for them which is also giving them the chance to provide a lot of products from small, quality Tuscan artisanal producers. Even the pizza flour comes from a small company in Tuscany where it is milled and blended according to Pizza Toscana's specific requirements.

