

# 'That's Amore' at Original Big Tomato



Richard and Phyllis Borenstein were newlyweds when they opened their gourmet pizza shop 14 years ago in Pinecrest. Today, their Original Big Tomato is a true mom and pop operation, with Phyllis working the front, Richard making the pizzas and 9-year-old daughter Taylor helping out when she can.

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The cute purple and red shop has won a devoted following for its unique, puffy crust — thicker on the sides, thinner in the center with cheese covering the crispy edges. It looks like Chicago deep-dish pie but is much lighter.

The couple met in 1971 at their Baltimore high school and dated briefly before Phyllis changed schools. She eventually moved to San Diego, where she in real estate for 20 years, while Richard became a CPA in Baltimore. Both got engaged to other people but never married.

They reconnected after 23 years when Richard ran into Phyllis' sister. Long phone conversations followed, and then an invitation to Florida, where Richard had relocated after his parents retired. Two months after their reunion, they married and went into pie partnership.

They call their creations tomato pies and base them on a pizza Richard fell in love with years ago at an Italian bakery in New York. When the place closed, he bought the recipe, which came to this country in the battered suitcase of a fourth-generation Sicilian baker.

Richard also bakes boule breads and stuffs them with salads, but the main event are the pies, available with original and whole-wheat crusts and all kinds of gourmet toppings.

The most popular is tomato sauce and mozzarella. Other favorites include Baja barbecue (chicken breast in smoky barbecue sauce with red onions and and Gouda), Sweet Sunshine (sun-dried tomatoes and goat cheese) Tex-Mex shrimp (with chiles, barbecue sauce, pineapple, shrimp and



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**PINECREST:** Phyllis, Taylor and Richard Borenstein with a bread bowl salad and pizza, above; below, wraps are also on the menu.



Gouda) and Pesto Passion (fresh pesto, chicken, onions, mozzarella and Gorgonzola).

Other combos have pepperoni or sausage, but most pies here are made with chicken. They include tangy Thai with spicy peanut sauce, Jamaican jerk and Santa Fe Sensation.

There are plenty of veggie options, from Vivacious Vegetarian



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Basil sun-dried tomato bread  
recipe: [MiamiHerald.com/Food](http://MiamiHerald.com/Food).

(fresh tomatoes, zucchini, mushrooms, peppers and mozzarella) to Mediterranean Magic (basil, olives, feta and other cheeses).

Pie is the main draw, but there are also rollers (wraps), panini, salads and soup of the day, ranging

from cream of mushroom to tomato Florentine with pasta and vegetables.

In Italian, tomato is pomodori or "love apple" — the perfect name for a place with a love story and a pie to love.

*Linda Bladhholm's latest book is Latin and Caribbean Grocery Stores Demystified.*

- Place: Original Big Tomato Gourmet Pizza.
- Address: 12447 S. Dixie Hwy., Pinecrest.
- Contact: 305-233-3344.
- Hours: 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday, noon-9 p.m. Sunday.
- Prices: Pies \$7.50-\$11.50, wraps and panini \$7.50, salads \$7.75-\$9.95, soup \$5.95.