



Mountain Rose Herbs in 2009 Organic Spa Gift Guide

AT HOME

foodstuff

The Greenest Pizza Ever!

Cross a newly retired Air Force veteran with a culinary training program in Italy, place them in a historic 1889 building in Colorado Springs, and guess what you get? Pizzeria Rustica!


When I first learned about this intensely popular new “green” pizza parlor, I had no idea what to expect—Unos with a HEPA air purifier or Sbarros minus the plastic carry-out bags? It was only after eating there that I realized there was no context for comparison. Pizzeria Rustica is such a cornucopia of sustainability initiatives, that it would be hard to know where to begin if it wasn't for the solid presence of the proprietor/pizzaiolo Dave Brackett.

There was never a time in Dave's life when he did *not* think green. He was raised on an organic farm but only recently, with retirement, had the opportunity to put his expertise into practice. Without missing a beat, he took a month-long intensive culinary course in Italy and then completed his training at the highly lauded Antika Pizzeria in Marina Del Rey, California. Standing by his conviction that a restaurant is “the nexus between the farmer and the consumer,” Dave buys directly from local farmers, and two local greenhouses are now devoted exclusively to growing organic produce for Pizzeria Rustica. There are, of course, the exceptions—the tomatoes

that Dave selected after testing 12 different types—are imported from Italy.

Pizzeria Rustica is equipped with Energy-Star low-water consumption kitchen appliances. There are no fossil fuel appliances in the restaurant. The restaurant also uses recycled cardboard pizza containers. More than 80 percent of its waste is recycled and the restaurant composts the uneaten food. Water is only served to customers on request, and whatever water is left behind is poured into the courtyard fountains. Pizzeria Rustica is dedicated to sustainability at its finest. Oh, and did I mention how amazing the pizza tastes? —Susanna Speier



OUR PICKS	WHY YOU SHOULD TRY
Adriana's Caravan	 <p>For years, Rochelle Zabarkes ran a tiny spice shop inside NYC's bustling Grand Central Terminal, Adriana's Caravan. Loyal customers sought out her varied collection of aromatic spices, like ground Aleppo pepper and whole Thai lime leaves. The store is shuttered but Zabarkes' online business continues to flourish, along with her sage advice; think green herbs have a shorter shelf life than brown spices. All Zabarkes' products are fresh and natural but for customers who want to spring for a pound or more, she can make sure the goods are organic. www.adrianascaravan.com</p>
Aromatica Organics	 <p>As an alternative to buying spices in bulk, San Marcos, California-based Aromatica Organics, dubbed the country's first organic spice company, has launched Spice It Now!, single portion packs of herb and spice blends. Sprinkle Mesquite BBQ over slow-cooked chicken, and Mediterranean Seafood for salmon with a kick. www.buyaromatica.com</p>
Frontier Natural Products Co-Op	 <p>Frontier Natural Products Co-op, based in Norway, Iowa, prides itself on its good relationships with small Sri Lankan farmers, and has new organic spices to flaunt from the region. Available in economical bulk, one-pound bags, the line-up includes: Ceylon cinnamon, nutmeg, and ground ginger and turmeric. Prowling around for a foodie stocking stuffer? Try Frontier's Gourmet Pepper line, with built-in, adjustable grinders. The botanicals are sourced from six different countries and include Smoked Black and Exotic Peppercorn blends, Ceylon White, Brazilian Pink, and warm, spicy Grains of Paradise. www.frontiercoop.com</p>
Mountain Rose Herbs	 <p>Taking the concept of Fair Trade even further, Mountain Rose Herbs, based in Eugene, Oregon, has introduced Epicurean Organics. This exotic line featuring the likes of Thai curry and Mexican Seasoning embraces the Mountain Rose Herbs Good Trade Program, which gives farmers full negotiation rights to determine their prices. The good karma continues: Buy a jar of Epicurean Organics and two percent of each purchase will go towards supporting the Organic Farming Research Foundation. www.mountainroseherbs.com</p>
Starwest Botanicals	 <p>Tracing its roots back to a small herb shop in Sacramento, California, in 1975, Starwest Botanicals has grown to become one of the country's largest suppliers of quality organic herbs. Now, more than 50 of its top spices and seasoning blends, such as lemon pepper and poppy seed, are available in convenient pouches with resealable, freshness-preserving closures and glass jars with easy-to-pour shaker tops. www.starwest-botanicals.com</p>