

Reuniting Families Through Food and Wine

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A Sunday at the Pizzeria Brunetti in the West Village... Sit down, relax... and listen to the story of how the Brunetti families reunited through the love of food and wine, and how the two separate families became one big "family."

Sunday is when the Italian families get together for their traditional Sunday lunch. The old fashioned image of a large Italian family, in the conventional sense, is becoming a thing of the past, both in the U.S. and in Italy. The structure of the traditional Italian family has dramatically changed over the past years and transformed to a less traditional and more unconventional one.

One of these unconventional stories is the Italian family of Pizzeria Brunetti, which was established as a result of a family reunion. After eighteen years apart from each other following a divorce, Michael Brunetti (aka Pop) and his son and Chief Pizzaiolo, Jason Brunetti (aka Sonny) reunited through their love and a shared passion for food and wine. They decided to go into business after realizing their passion and perfectionism to the task of making an ideal Neapolitan pizza. Sonny



moved from Florida and together they created their proprietary dough. They opened a first pizza place in Westhampton Beach in 2009 and more recently, a new spot in the West Village.

Ingredients are either home-made or imported from Italy, such as mozzarella di Bufala, San Marzano tomatoes, prosciutto crudo di Parma or imported Soppressata. "The quest for authentic ingredients is a way to reconnect to our roots" – says Michael Brunetti. "We reunited our family with a project of being loyal to our roots and origins, not to cut corners."

Pop and Sonny applied the same commitment to authenticity with their wine list. The wines surprisingly reunited the Brunetti's with an additional Brunetti, as Pop and Sonny met another Brunetti. Bruno Brunetti has been helping them picking the wines for their wine list.

Michael likes to tell the story of how he got to know Bruno. "Dear Michael Brunetti, this is Bruno Brunetti! I have read about your pizza. Let's meet!" – Michael recalls of an email he received from Bruno back in 2010. Bruno moved from Italy over 10 years ago. Born and raised in Apulia, where his family still grows grapes and olive oil trees, Bruno is an example of the new Italian realities: a young generation that left the land and the farm to pursue a career in the financial industry.

Bruno is now a successful market analyst in the energy industry, having spent over 15 years working for international consulting firms, but he connected again with his family living in Italy through his passion for wine and olive oil, which brings him back to his childhood memories in Italy. Along with the help of his partner Gal Keren, this fascination became a reality. Bruno and Gal have put together a project which makes the lesser known wine varieties available in New York. "We have been long looked for authentic wines on the shelves, but with little success" – Bruno said.

Three years later after the first reunion, back in 2010, the Brunetti's are all together sharing delicious pizza and wines in the West Village in a Sunday night. We are having Santiquaranta wines, from the Benevento area in Campania. Moscato Sannio DOC is made from Moscato del Baselice, from the family of the moscato grape, but the Moscato del Baselice is a grape that is now almost entirely extinct. Santiquaranta's Moscato del Baselice is soft, sweet at first followed by hints of fruit, which goes very well with the Soppressata pizza. Soppressata is a dried Italian sausage, which is put on top of creamy Burrata cheese, roasted red peppers and red pepper oil.

There is a welcoming atmosphere in the air and one big happy family at the tables of Pizzeria Brunetti, a family that is happy to have finally reunited.

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