

Quest for the best... Pizza

by Nancy Thompson
Photo by Bradley E. Clift

Kevin Plaut, co-owner of
Harry's Bishop's Corner.



How they scored:	Harry's BC	Frank Pepe's	Luna	Barb's	First & Last	Vito's
Appearance	4	5	1 (tie)	1 (tie)	2	3
Crust	1	4 (tie)	3	4 (tie)	2	5
Sauce	1	2	3	5	4	5
Topping	1	2	4 (tie)	3	4 (tie)	5
Flavor	1	2	3 (tie)	3 (tie)	4	5
Satisfaction	1	2	3	5	4	5



1 Harry's Bishop's Corner

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■ This was a clear winner if you don't mind a bit of messiness.

Harry's Bishop's Corner pizza won the only perfect ratings given by any of our judges, along with a lot of close-to-perfect scores.

Tom gave the pie perfect sixes for crust, sauce, flavor and overall quality, but only a three for the topping because he felt there should have been more pepperoni. "It's my favorite," he said. "It's not an attractive presentation, but eat it with your

eyes closed." Chef Carbone agreed. "It's not eye-appealing, but it has a very good taste," he said.

Chef Burnett liked the flavor and the crust but thought the crust was too thin to adequately support the ingredients.

Former New Yorker Chef Prosperi gave the pie a perfect score for crust, adding, "This is good pizza to me." Michael praised it for its flavor and appearance, calling it "a close second" to Pepe's.

■ Is there any food more subjective than pizza? Anything that elicits more passion or reflects more diversity of taste? Probably not, but that didn't stop us from searching for the best pizza in Hartford County.

Instead of doing the sampling ourselves, though, we invited a **panel of noted chefs** to apply their years of experience and their trained palates to the task.

Ted Burnett, executive chef at Max Amore in Glastonbury, **Vinnie Carbone** of Carbone's Ristorante in Hartford and **Christopher Prosperi** of Metro Bis in Simsbury accepted our invitation to sample pizzas from six of the many pizza restaurants in Greater Hartford. Co-publisher **Michael Guinan** and editorial director **Tom Krazit** filled in for two chefs who were unable to take part.

The restaurants from which we ordered take-out pizzas for the blind test are popular and well known, but we acknowledge that we may have omitted your personal favorites. (We even had a last-minute

restaurant substitution when we learned that Harry's in West Hartford Center isn't always open at lunchtime.)

We asked our judges to consider **appearance, crust, sauce, topping** (all were pepperoni), **flavor** and **satisfaction**. How did we come to our decision? Each of our five judges ranked each pizza. We added the rankings and divided by five. No higher math for this one, but a couple scores were pretty close to statistical ties.

If there's something to be learned from this, it's that pizza is a very personal preference. For some of our judges, salty pepperoni was a bad thing, while others enjoyed it. Appearance was the most diverse of all. If you want a pretty pizza, Frank Pepe's is a clear loser, yet our judges liked the taste of this pie from the region's newcomer, originally from New Haven.

Whatever your personal taste, chances are you'll find it close by.

Buon appetito!