

FRIDAY
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The Seattle Times



DINING OUT

RESTAURANTS



PIZZA 5

DINING DEALS

Meals for less than \$25 per person



EXTREME PIZZA

660 Front St. N., Issaquah; 425-837-1700

Web site:
www.extremepizza.com

Hours: 11 a.m.-11 p.m.
Sundays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-midnight
Fridays-Saturdays

Beer and wine / AE, D, MC, V / no smoking / no obstacles to access

Rating: Recommended

Daring combinations make sense to the taste buds

By Kathryn Robinson /
Special to The Seattle Times

The hottest pizza franchise in the West has landed in two Seattle-area locations — Capitol Hill (700 Broadway E., 206-726-8800), and the subject of today's review, a former ice-cream stop on Front Street in Issaquah. With more than 20 locations throughout Colorado, California and assorted other spots, Extreme Pizza has built its solid reputation on pizza topped with healthful, culinarily innovative ingredients. Out-of-the-box thinking, applied to the ultimate in-the-box food.

Like a pie ("Peace in the Middle East") featuring housemade hummus, tomatoes, olives, onions, feta, fresh basil, pepperoncinis and mozzarella.

Or one ("California Cactus") with black beans and salsa,

grilled chicken or green chilies, black olives, red onions, tomatoes, jalapeños, cilantro and cheddar. Or another ("Kickin' Chicken") topped with chicken marinated in a spicy ginger peanut sauce, scallions, fresh cilantro, mozzarella and fontina.

Weirdest of all is the fact that these terrifying combinations taste really, really good. No fly-by-night novelty joint, Extreme Pizza has clearly spent quality kitchen time testing different combos for maximum harmony, and my critical hat is off to them for it. (I mean really: Ranch-dressing marinated chicken, broccoli, Swiss, fresh sage and Gorgonzola is not exactly an intuitive match. I'd like to have been a mouse-in-the-corner on that test-kitchen day.)

The company, lauded within the business world for its enlight-

ened corporate policies and savvy extreme-sports sponsorships, clearly puts a premium as well on go-the-extra-mile service. Somehow, a pun-loving joint decorated in screaming red-and-yellow and staffed by skateboarders (or folks who look like them) wouldn't appear to promise quality service, but I couldn't have been more wrong. The evening of our visit found the kitchen overburdened with orders, which our young counter jockey handled with accommodating aplomb, even steering us toward a \$2.75 slice of cheese pizza in lieu of a small pie, roughly the same size, at \$4.95.

Now that's a pizza joint that delivers. (Which . . . it also does.)

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