

An Open Letter To Our Loyal Family Of Customers:



It is with much disappointment that I have to announce to you that Virgilio's Pizzeria Napoletana will not be a part of Belmar's Festival Italiano 2009. I know that over the past three consecutive years, you have flocked to our booth at the Festival in record numbers. As many of you know, Virgilio's is not your ordinary pizza joint. We are truly an authentic Italian Pizzeria in every sense of the term. I was born in Naples, Italy and my family came to the United States when my brother and I were very young. As a close, tight-knit Italian family, food matters to us...and making sure everyone enjoys only the very best food is my personal priority. The Festival Italiano was truly one of the highlights of our year, and something that I, my staff, and my family looked forward to each year. In fact, as many of you know, I've flown in family from both Italy and from Connecticut to help out at our booth in past years.

We've spent literally thousands of dollars on equipment, signage, and supplies just to make our loyal customers more at home enjoying our award winning pizza, so aside from the personal disappointment; there is a significant financial impact on us as well.

Rest assured, we had nothing to do with our departure from the Festival. This started last year, in fact only when facing the possibility of legal action did the Event Manager, Carol Hiller allow us to participate. We were originally accepted, only to receive a telephone call informing me that we could not participate after all. After much anxiety and legal fees later, we were allowed in. This year, our application was simply denied. Why? Here are direct quotes from the Event Manager in a letter to me:

- *"The success of Belmar's Festival Italiano has unfortunately necessitated the restriction of the number of vendor applications that we can accept for this year's Festival."*
- *"The Oven and Mark & Isabella have chosen to participate in the year's event selling pizza."* and
- *"...we have received more applications for this category than space allows. Therefore, we regretfully must advise you that we are unable to accept your application at this year's event."*

Therefore, because we have been one of the most successful vendors of the entire Festival Italiano, enabling the Festival to experience great success, and because two restaurants which rent space in Belmar "have chosen to participate", we now must stand on the sidelines and watch the other pizza joints ride our coattails and benefit from our success. You should know that both The Oven and Mark & Isabella are owned not by a local family, like Virgilio's, but by Phoenix, Arizona corporate restaurateur Mark Tarbell. Put bluntly, Virgilio's is not allowed to participate because the folks at Belmar want to protect Tarbell's rent-paying businesses from the direct competition of our award-winning pizza. *(By the way, Mark you're welcome... I was happy to let The Oven use a mixer when yours was broken for 2 days, so you could keep selling pizzas.)*

This is simply unfair to us, and it's unfair to you, our family of loyal customers. It is small town politics at it's worst when arguably the one restaurant which embodies what a true, authentic Festival Italiano is all about is blocked from participating. Shame on the Festival Italiano event manager and managing committee.

Only at Virgilio's Pizzeria Napoletana are you treated as **"un membro della nostra famiglia"** -- a member of our family. We hope that you will be a loyal member of our extended family and support us by letting Festival Italiano know how you feel about their actions and animosity toward us. If any of you would like to support us, feel free to contact the Belmar General Manager, Lary Herkal at (303) 282-5073 and the event manager, Carol Hiller directly via email at caroleyii@aol.com.

Thank you again for all of your support, and we hope to see you here, at Virgilio's Pizzeria Napoletana for your own festival Italiano during the weekend of September 19 & 20!

Sincerely,

Virgilio Mario Urbano