

Patxi's – pronounced "Pa Cheese" – brings deep-dish pizza, other Italian dishes to Porter Ranch

The restaurant, defined by red used-brick walls, black and white tables and chairs and a brown wooden floor opened at 11 a.m. for outdoor patio dining and takeout services until "Safer at Home" orders are eased and the main dining area can open.

One of the few choices for deep-dish pizza restaurants in the area opened Monday morning at The Vineyards at Porter Ranch in the northwest San Fernando Valley.

Patxi's Pizza, pronounced "Pa Cheese" and named after the chain's co-founder Francisco "Patxi" Azpiroz, also serves up thin-crust pizza, sandwiches and salads at its latest location at 20101 W. Rinaldi St, Suite 100 in Porter Ranch.

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Co-owner and Porter Ranch resident Christine Demirtshian had her first slice of Patxi's at a business meeting in Santa Barbara and immediately knew it was a winning formula.

She comes from a long line of family restauranteurs and is branching out on her own with this one.

"I put my blood, sweat and tears into this that's how much I believe in this brand," Demirtshian said.

People have been popping into the restaurant in anticipation of its opening, some transplants from the Bay Area and Colorado who were familiar with the restaurant and excited to see it come into The Vineyards.

Demirtshian has hired 30 employees and expects to bump that number up once the coronavirus pandemic gets under control.

Located across from Gus's BBQ and a still shuttered AMC Theater, the Sausalito headquartered Patxi's Pizza founded in 2004, currently operates 19 full-services restaurants in Santa Barbara, San Francisco's Bay Area, Denver and Seattle.

The new Porter Ranch restaurant features a variety of pizza styles including Chicago-style deep dish, Neapolitan thin crust and dessert pizzas.

Fan favorites include the Chicken Tikka Masala deep dish pizza with spicy tikka masala sauce, spinach, herb-roasted chicken, red onion, roasted garlic, tomatoes, cilantro and the Bianco Verde thin-crust pizza with pesto, herbed ricotta, mozzarella & parmesan.

The menu also includes hearty appetizers, wings, Piadina sandwiches, signature salads and beer and wine.

The restaurant will host indoor seating for 80 guests and two patios that seat up to 40 guests, once it is fully operational.

In 2018, Patxi's Pizza was acquired by Elite Restaurant Group, a multi-concept operator with a focus on emerging restaurant chains that also owns Slater's 50/50, Daphne's, Marie Callender's, Mimi's, and Gigi's Cupcakes.

Patxi's Pizza is one of the latest tenants to open at The Vineyards at Porter Ranch, a \$150-million mixed-use open-air development, 220,000-square-foot shopping complex at the intersection of Rinaldi Street and Porter Ranch Drive by Shapell Liberty Investment Properties and is part of the master-planned Porter Ranch community.

A 4,000-square-foot community meeting room was completed and opened last month only to be shuttered because of the corona virus pandemic.

Some of the current tenants already in place include Jersey Mike's Subs, Gus's BBQ, Whole Foods, Ulta Beauty, Nordstrom Rack and a Kaiser-Permanente medical office building.

Future plans include the 100-room Hampton Inn & Suites, a four-story, 60,900 square-foot hotel, according to the company's website.

Leasing at a 266-unit luxury apartment complex behind the shopping center is slated to begin this fall. A sidewalk links the apartments and the center.

The Vineyards at Porter Ranch began construction in June of 2017.

As with any construction, it was delayed for a myriad of reasons including design changes, winter rainstorms and other hiccups along the way including this year's corona virus outbreak that threw even greater restrictions onto the entire project as a whole and individual tenants with their own issues as a side note.

Approximately 70 percent of the 30-plus businesses is leased.

Trek Bicycle, The Joint Chiropractic and Finney's Craffhouse & Kitchen are on board to join the mix along with other unnamed tenants, according to a company spokesperson.

The first store to open was Whole Foods on May 22, 2019.

Two water features using recycled water, bike racks, water bottle re-fill stations, EV car charging station and underground cisterns used for irrigation as all part of the center that was designed with sustainability in mind.