

Taste the pure winter comfort of *pasta ripiena* at 95 at Parks this winter!

 By Leigh Andrews

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This media invite was an intriguing one, as we were promised a *pasta ripiena* master class, with 95 collection founder Giorgio Nava sharing some of his secrets, even embarking on the 'does pineapple belong in an Italian kitchen' debate.



All images supplied.

Pasta ripiena is what you're craving in winter. Loosely translated to "stuffed pasta", these are the large ravioli and smaller *cappelletti* and *fagottini* pasta bundles that you can infuse with any filling that tickles your taste buds and serve with any sauce on the light to rich and creamy spectrum – chef's honour...

Nava's 95 Keerom and 95 at Parks are once again celebrating all things pasta with a special *pasta ripiena* menu, available exclusively during the months of June and July.



95 Keerom celebrates stuffed pasta with special menu this June

Ruth Cooper 5 Jun 2018



To kick things off, chef Nava hosted a small group of media at a special *pasta ripiena* masterclass, which proved that 95@Parks is the place to be this winter. With sunlight streaming in the beautifully dressed windows, on the yellowwood tables with splashes of Italian green on the doorways and leather seats, it's all the winter warmth you need – and then there's the food!

Not one to toot his own horn, Nava was joined by ‘authentic Italian mama’ Giovanna and Jonas, who demonstrated how they make and seal their filled pasta specialities, as each has their preferred method, with the same mouth-watering result.



All images supplied.

As this was set to be an afternoon of tasting, we were treated to glasses of Durbanville Hills *chenin blanc*, slices of *grana padana* and the freshest deep-fried zucchini – the secret is less flour-oil ratio, more temperature difference between the vegetable (cold as possible) and the frying oil (hot as you can get it).

A masterclass table was set up with chopping boards, already prepared pasta dough draped in plastic and fillings in plastic bags for piping.

The star of the show is the *ravioli*, the ultimate winter comfort food. At the 95 collection these are all handmade and you can taste the care that goes into getting the pasta as yellow and thin as possible as the focus should be on the filling.

The colour is down to the amount of eggs used, the thickness to the patience with rolling out the sheets of pasta – whether you use a noisy old machine or prefer to roll it flat with a rolling pin.

Egg-cellent pasta pillow process

We learned many tips and tricks throughout the afternoon to improve our own pasta process at home, but nothing beats going out for a treat meal.



All images supplied.

At 95 at Parks and 95 Keerom that includes ravioli with spinach-and-ricotta, butternut-and-ricotta or lamb.



Savouring Giorgio Nava's new Italian Experience at 95 at Parks

Leigh Andrews 8 Aug 2017



To make those perfectly plump pillows of pasta, Nava emphasised the importance letting the pasta dough rest, and while he prefers using a special flour milled in Durbanville, he said of greatest importance is incorporating enough egg into the mix. For a kilo of pasta, he recommends 10 to 15 eggs.

For the sauce, emulate Nava's delightfully light-and-buttery burnt sage, or go for something creamier or authentically tomatoey like a *sugo*. We tried them all on the day.



All images supplied.

For the filling, Nava's team simply use spinach that's steamed and finely chopped or oven-roasted and blended butternut, both mixed with ricotta and a bit of Grana Padana.

For the 95 signature lamb ravioli, Nava uses slow-cooked shoulder and rounds balls of roughly 10g balls as filling. Again, you can fill these pasta pockets with almost anything you like – mushroom and cheese tastes especially moreish.

Once you have your rested pasta dough and filling ready for piping, set up a production line – some like to use egg to seal the pillow, others prefer water – the choice is yours.

Craft the shape, keep aside the excess pasta to make even more of those pasta pillows, then place your parcels on the heat and Hey presto! Authentic Italian *pasta ripiena* from your very own kitchen. You can safely freeze it for a month, just don't leave it to thaw – pop it right into the pot still frozen, said Nava.

All the shapes of flavour

Our masterclass specialities having finally emerged from the kitchen, it was finally time to 'break bread' together at a long table and sample (not just look at) all that delicious food... what a treat!

First up, the velvety-smooth ravioli – we were each presented with a large duo of butternut and spinach pillows, ladled with the most delicious classic *burro e salvia* sage butter sauce.

“ Probably the best pasta in Cape Town, [#PastaRipiena](#) served [@95Keerom](#) and [#95atParks](#) until end July. Sublime, light-as-air pasta with exquisite fillings pic.twitter.com/DE58HsepOr— EatDrinkCPT (@lusciousCT) [June 26, 2019](#) ”

The lamb shoulder was delicious, the *cappelletti as prosciutto crudo con panna frescan e piselli* a creamy delight with those fresh pops of cream, and all the cheesy goodness you'd expect of four-cheese *fagottini* bundles, but the Porcini mushroom-filled *panzerotti* our table's favourite of the day.

We were in complete pasta heaven but don't worry if pasta's not your thing, as Nava has also taken on the challenge of creating a pizza he'd like to eat himself. It's a difficult one as Nava says, “truly Italian pizza is different to what you've come to know here in South Africa.”

Traditionally a "poor, peasant food", this has evolved into a gourmet standard for some, with the 95 collection offering a small, carefully curated selection made from Nava's special [Milanese mother dough](#), fed with yeast for the past 150 years. He says that he added pizza to the menu as people want value when they eat out – that's also why they now serve wine by the glass.

Pizza: From poor man's food to gourmet staple

You won't find banana or pineapple on the pizza here though, as that's not the way it's done in Italy. Nava, a self-pronounced 'fussy Italian', cries: “You'd practically be arrested for doing that there!”

Kids in particular enjoy his pizza offering, with the fried-dough *Neapolitan Montanara* a standout on the menu. It's crunchy, light and delicious. Sometimes, simple is better.



All images supplied.

Next on our tasting menu for the day was just this fried pizza which crisps up beautifully, having dried out in the oven and topped with zingy tomato and mozzarella that melts in the mouth.

We ended with a sweet sorbet cleanser and finally got a taste of pineapple – served sorbet-style with a sliver of strawberry, a gooseberry and mint leaf, which proved that's where pineapple belongs.

BONUS: [Download Chef Nava's master class recipes!](#)

Leigh Andrews was a guest of 95 at Parks. The 95 Pasta Ripiena offering is available alongside Chef Giorgio's regular à la carte menu until the end of July. 95 Keerom is situated at 95 Keerom Street in the Cape Town CBD and is open for dinner from Monday to Saturday. For bookings call Tel: 021-422 0765 or email info@95keerom.com.

95 at Parks is situated at 114 Constantia Main Road and is open for lunch and dinner from Monday to Saturday, with secure parking on the premises. For bookings call Tel: 021-7610247 or email parks@95keerom.com.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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