

am NEWYORK

Get a slice of Naples at this

pizza fest

The Bronx to host pie affair this fall

BY NICOLE LEVY

nicole.levy@amny.com

Eat your way around the country's top pizzerias on one Bronx street this fall.

As many as 30 pizza makers from across the U.S., and a small contingent from Naples, Italy, will sell tastes of their signature pies and slices during the first-ever New York Pizza Festival.

The outdoor festival, taking place on Crescent Avenue in Belmont's Little Italy district over Columbus Day weekend, is modeled after one of the world's largest celebrations of cheese-y, saucy flatbread — the Napoli Pizza Village in Naples.

"Our idea was to have a similar concept to what's overseas: a two-day celebration to bring some of the most renowned pizza makers from around the

U.S. . . . to have these stands lining the street in New York, where people can come and enjoy and try these expressions of pizza," said Fred Mortati, 52, an Italian foods importer whose Financial District-

based group Pizza Acad-

Gino Sorbillo is one of the participants.

emy Foundation is organizing the event with the Belmont Business Improvement District.

A fixture at the Naples event, famed pizzaiolo Gino Sorbillo — who opened his eponymous pizzeria in NYC last year — will be one of the participants at the New York Pizza Festival.

"The pizza world is strong all over the world, especially in New York, and after Napoli Pizza Village, New York will be another great spectacle and pizza community gathering," he said in a statement.

Pizzerias thus far committed to visiting

SAVE THE DATE

The New York Pizza Festival is slated to be Oct. 6-7 from noon-6 p.m. on Crescent Avenue in the Bronx | Tickets for samples will soon be available at nycpizzafestival.com

what Mortati called "arguably the number one city for pizza, after Naples" include: San Francisco's Tony's Pizza Napoletana, from 12-time World Pizza Champion Tony Gemignani; Seattle's Tutta Bella Neapolitan Pizzeria; Atlanta's The Local Pizzeria, from Giulio Adriani, the four-time World Pizza Champion behind Forcella in New York; and Chicago's Spacca Napoli.

New York favorites like Kesté Pizza & Vino, Denino's and Speedy Romeo are also on the lineup curated by local pizza historian and tour guide Scott Wiener and Pizza Today magazine's Peter LaChapelle.

While there appears to be an

initial emphasis on Neapolitan-style pies — the most traditional of which are prepared with cheese, tomatoes and flour imported from Italy and baked quickly in wood-fired ovens for a spotty crust with a wet center — Mortati promised pizza aficionados variety.

"Each restaurant has their own beliefs and styles and makes the product they want to make," he said. "There are participants who follow a very authentic Neapolitan tradition. Then there are going to be participants that have a New York-style product that use different ingredients and different techniques, so I think you're going to see a lot of everything."

Pizzerias will be cooking up their pies right on the street, in wood-burning brick and electric deck ovens supplied by two sponsors, Mortati said. Entry is free, but attendees will be able to buy tickets in advance for samples.

Mortati knows full well that the concept of a New York pizza festival comes with baggage: Last September, what was supposed to be a "day long celebration of dough, cheese, tasty sauces and delicious toppings" became the "Fyre Festival for pizza" when the New York City Pizza Festival drew thousands of hungry and subsequently enraged ticket holders to a Bushwick lot with three tables and a few cold slivers of the headlining dish.

"People will get a lot to eat," Mortati said. "They will not be disappointed."



SORBILLO NYC

