

VAPIANO

Noble and fresh System Gastronomy

By offering freshly made pasta and pizza, the restaurant chain Vapiano operated out of Bonn, Germany wants to have its slice of the system gastronomy cake. By the end of next year about 50 new restaurants are supposed to open in Germany and other countries.

Eating at Vapiano is always an adventure: behind a sheet of glass one can watch the fresh pasta dough pour out of the pasta Manifattura. But most customers immediately make their way to one of the stations where salads are carefully arranged, pasta dishes are freshly prepared and pizzas are covered with toppings. When it is the customer's turn at the pasta station, the cook will submerge the chosen noodles into boiling water and then cook the desired pasta sauce in front of the customer's eyes in a round pan. During the cooking process, the customer can decide if he wants garlic or not, extra pepper or some chili – and all of this takes not more than 3 minutes since fresh pasta is being used.

Cooking among Friends

“When eating at Vapiano, our customers should have the feeling as if cooking with friends” says chief executive Mirko Silz as he explains the concept. When the first restaurant opened 4 years ago in Hamburg, the owners had not even thought for 1 second that this concept could develop into a restaurant chain. Klaus Rader and Friedemann Fiendeis had already established the restaurant chain l'Osteria whereas Kent Hahne and Mirko Silz got their experience in the system gastronomy at McDonalds. In addition, the owner of the SIDE Hotel group, Gregor Gerlach, joined in. He brought along famous architect Mattheo Thun who had already designed the Hamburg SIDE Hotel for Gerlach and who created VAPIANO's image: wood furniture reminiscent of Italian Osteria taverns, where customers can always find a spot at one of the long tables. However the tavern ambiance is not quite based on beige and red leather and fresh herbs in marble containers as one can find at Vapiano.

That is how the concept of front cooking was borne which is currently cultivated in 12 restaurants. Three of these restaurants are owned by the corporation, four are joint ventures with partners and five are operated by Franchisees. The plan is to have 25 restaurants up and running by December and the long term plan is to have 60 open by the end of next year. The expansion list for this year includes Dortmund and a second location for Frankfurt. Required is a 500 m² plus large restaurant area. With sales of 10.4 Mio Euros last year, Vapiano's goal for this year is 23 Mio Euros.

Vapiano moves in on Office Space

The company has always avoided prime locations and their surroundings for example the backside of the Düsseldorf Shadow Arcade.

By now the owners are convinced, that Vapiano can also do well in mixed office/residential areas. “When we opened up inside the Erich Ollenhauer building in Bonn two months ago, our focus was mainly on the lunch business” says Silz. To everyone's surprise, however, the restaurant located in a 100% business area, did even better business in the evening. “Because of being able to park and use public transportation” is what Silz sees as the reason. In fact, access to public transportation is one of the most important criteria when searching for a location... so that the customers can also consume an alcoholic beverage ... or two.

(Photo)

The average price for a meal at Vapiano is 10 Euros.