

cover story

PIE IN THE SKY

Crack team of food tasters sees how local pizzas stack up

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THE GAZETTE

All hail the sports fan! This is your season, baby: football, basketball, hockey, single-elimination round-robin squash — you name it, it's on the tube for your enjoyment. The only pesky thing is the whole feeding situation. You gotta eat, but you don't want to get off the recliner because you'll surely miss that 64-yard interception return.

You could risk asking the missus, but what if she cleans your clock again for interrupting her "Desperate Housewives"? Worse, what if the missus is really your college roommate, and the only reason he's going to get off the couch is to body-slam you into the coffee table?

You could pick up the cell and have your day saved by Pizza Delivery Dude. But which one to go with? The choices are virtually endless these days: deep dish or thin crust, predetermined or made-to-order, pepperoni or pepperoncini — the mind boggles.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the pizza in America, we assembled 10 of the Springs' finest pies. It wasn't easy. There are probably another dozen decent pizza places, and we arbitrarily decided to stick with just the independent restaurants. Maybe we'll do the chains next time.

Then we subjected them to rigorous scientific testing in our state-of-the-art culinary lab. OK, we actually recruited woefully untrained, poor starving wretches who were mulling around the break room when we started bringing in the pizzas.

The effect is the same: unbiased, raw data that could be turned into a ranking of the top dogs in the cheese and crust arena. Sorting out the grease-filled rating sheets was fun, too. I think.

Anyway, rating sheets were distributed, lab rats — umm, assistants — were glued to chairs to make sure we got the proper input and tallied the scores. The contenders lined up in a neat little hierarchy, if you don't count the fifth-place tie.

Ratings range from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) and were added up and averaged to arrive at a score for each pie.



There wasn't much left but empty, aromatic boxes after Gazette newsroom employees — aka "woefully untrained, poor starving wretches" — participated in a pizza taste test.

2. Extreme Pizza



(7340 N. Academy Blvd., 522-1515; 2130 Southgate Road, 634-1616)

Giant Yard Sale Pizza

Averaged Score: 6.6

Raters' comments: "Fresh veggies, piled high. . . . More than grease and dough. . . . Good taste but includes entire grocery store. . . . New Yorkers would hate this!"

CONCLUSION: Toppings seemed to tip the scale. The heavy-topping pizzas of Mama Trino's and Extreme Pizza won out over the plain thin-crust New York-style pies, and you can tell we didn't have many Windy City judges because the Chicago deep dish at Billy's proved too much for most of them.

I was disappointed that my favorite, Borriello Brothers, didn't score higher. It's all this anti-grease fad, you know. I like a full six fluid ounces on a slice, but most of our other testers were not so fat-happy.