

PIZZA: ▼

How does it stack up here at ISU?

By The Whole Gang
Pizza Taste-Testing Staff

It's late on a Saturday night. You've just stumbled in from a donistic drinking fest the likes of which Spuds McKenzie has never seen. And as you wade through the alcoholic murk that clouds your mind only one thought comes to mind: Pizza!

One can almost taste the tart, tangy sauce-covered crust covered by thick, gooey cheese while reaching for the phone book. Pet shops... pharmacies... physicians (maybe later)... and finally the pizza page flips into view. But wait. Horror of horrors, there are over 20 pizza places to choose from! What a predicament.

To deal with this all too familiar situation, the management and staff of Friday's Magazine have, in their great wisdom, organized this handy-dandy guide to the creme de la creme of fine 'za purveyors in the area.

Of course this was not a one-man project. Many members of the Daily Vidette staff were called upon to perform the rigorous task of taste-testing the best pizza that ISU has to offer.

And after sampling a basic cheese and sausage pizza from each establishment, every taste-tester had to fill out a form asking them how they would rate each pizza for taste (1-10), what they especially liked about the product, and what, if any, dislikes they had.

The results of this survey by no means represent a scientific study, they just reflect the opinions of our staff,

most of whom like to eat pizza.

The first one to arrive on test night was Dominos which is located on Beaufort Street across from Watterson Towers.

As many students know, Dominos is a large national chain which was started several years ago by a man from Michigan who likes Frank Lloyd Wright. It could be called the McDonalds of the pizza world.

Dominos' main selling point is that they deliver a pizza to your door, piping hot, within 30 minutes. And by being the first dough pie to arrive at the Daily Vidette on Monday, they certainly reinforced their position in the speedy delivery department.

As for the product itself, our reviewers had a lot to say about it.

Most people liked the crust which was soft and chewy. However, most of us felt that the sausage had the look, taste and texture of Milk Duds. It was the big negative.

On the plus side, the majority surveyed felt that Dominos was the best choice if you're desperate for pizza and you need it fast.

Dominos' average taste score was 6.6. The next cheese and sausage concoction to arrive on our doorstep was a pan-style pizza from Checkers in Bloomington.

This fine establishment is fairly new on the 'za market and is owned by a former ISU student.

In fact, owner Mike Gudat hand-delivered our pizza himself. Most of us had never eaten a Checkers pizza

before Monday and we were anxious to sample the goods.

As we took the first few bites, each person tried to announce his or her verdict in between chews.

"MMM, lotsaMM cheese," said one person. "I GLOMZZ like the CHOMP sauce," said another.

But there were a few dissenters as well. "ACK, PHTOOIE, the crust on my end is burnt," said one pizza connoisseur. And another aficionado complained about too little sauce.

Overall, Checkers, scores varied greatly. One reviewer loved it and gave it a nine, another hated it and gave it a three. The average score was 6.9.

Next up on the chopping block was a thick crust creation from Papa John's of Normal. This business is run out of a small shack at the corner of Willow and Normal though the pizza it produces is definitely not lower-class.

Almost everyone of us raved about everything from the generous helpings of mozzarella to the spicy tartness of the sauce. But, of course, nothing is unanimous.

Our resident ulcer candidate thought both the sausage and the sauce were too spicy and gave it a two. This lowered Papa John's average score to 7.1.

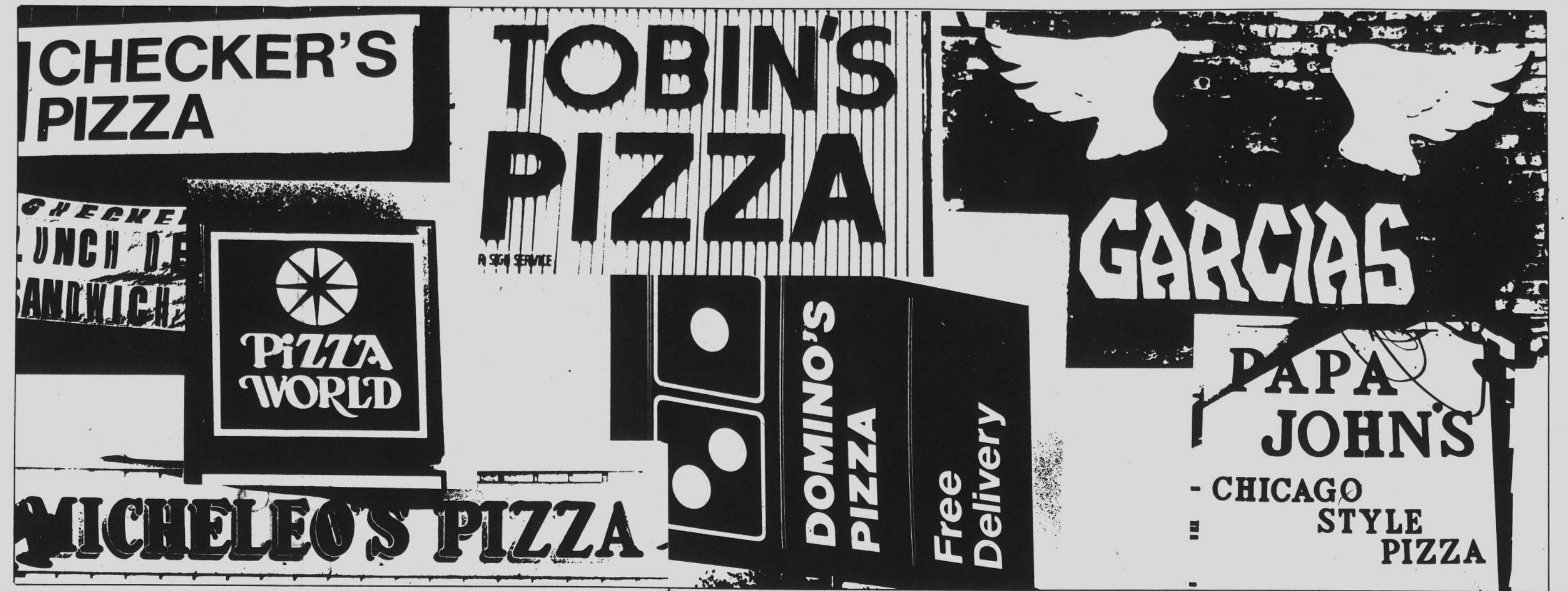
When the esteemed editor of Friday's Magazine thought up this review of local pizza establishments, he sent a letter stating his intentions to several area pizzerias asking for their cooperation. Most graciously obliged. Some did not.

But in the melee of organization that is the Daily Vidette, the head editorial Friday's boob had apparently forgotten to include one of the areas most renowned pizzerias; or so his staff informed him.

So at the last minute, said editor broke down and shelled out \$7.33 from his own pocket for a medium cheese and sausage pizza from Tobins of Bloomington.

Apparently, this restaurant has been around for quite some time and is equally popular with students from ISU and Wesleyan for their chicken and fish, as well as pizza.

Perhaps on Monday the people at Tobin's were having an off day because



the pizza did not live up to everyone's expectations.

The main complaint everyone had with the thin-crust pie was the synthetic taste-fee of the sausage and cheese. The worst part came when someone mentioned Soylent Green.

However, not everyone hated it and the pizza skated by with a 5.7 taste average.

The next pizza to slather our tastebuds was the old standby, Garcia's.

Even though this establishment was started 17 years ago at U of I by two hippies named Ralph and Joe, it is somehow intermingled with the ISU college experience.

How many students are there who didn't eat at Garcia's at least once a week during their freshman year. Most of us did.

Maybe, that's why good ol' Garcia's scored so low in our survey. All of us are just so used to buying it by the slice that a whole Garcia's pizza seems almost

alien. However, while we're at it, most of us would like to ask one question. Why does Garcia's pizza always seem to be undercooked? The crust almost always is just one degree away from dough.

All that aside, Garcia's is still extremely generous with toppings and should be commended for all the fresh veggies that are heaped on slices like the Gutbuster.

The pan version, however, earned an average of 5.1.

Another famous ISU institution is Pizza World. This fast-growing chain was started right here several years ago and has been booming ever since.

Long known for its bland but fast version of thick-crust pizza, recently Pizza World has cleaned up its act and introduced a true pan pizza to its lineup of products. Needless to say, it's an improvement.

Our reviewers loved the new thick crust version of cheese and sausage 'za. There was plenty of cheese and the crust was crisp and not too chewy.

The only complaint we really had was that the sauce, though generous, was not spicy enough.

The new Pizza World received an average score of seven.

Last, but certainly not least, the driver from Micheleleo's on North Street trotted into the Vidette at 7:30 p.m. and set down a massive creation of crust, sauce, cheese and sausage the likes of which God had never seen.

Eyes lit up and pizza was quickly glommed into avaricious mouths. Everyone almost forgot to fill out the surveys.

But when they did, the choice was almost unanimous. Micheleleo's was king. Some of the comments ranged

from a litany about really thick cheese to a unanimous praise of the spicy hot sauce.

In fact, the only down side to the Micheleleo's surveys came from one girl who pronounced it too greasy but gave it a seven anyway.

Micheleo's average score was an overwhelmingly high 8.3.

Overall, this experience was very enlightening (or should we say enfilling) for all involved.

We learned that ISU is the home to a great number of good pizzerias. And, after all, didn't someone once say that pizza is a lot like sex, even when it's bad it's good.

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