

Dining

November 24, 2005

Say ‘Cheese!’**Corrieri’s Formaggeria whets appetites with its selection of imported cheeses, Italian products and massive sandwiches**

by [Kay West](#)

A couple weeks ago, I got an email from a reader wondering if there was an Italian market in town. Not only was I able to answer in the affirmative, but I informed her that there were now two in Nashville. The Italian Market opened on 51st Avenue North, in the Sylvan Park area, late this summer. And just a couple weeks ago, much to the delight of 12 South residents, Corrieri’s Formaggeria has finally, after several months of construction and anticipation, opened its doors.



This is wonderful news indeed. Last winter, I spent a long and irritating afternoon trekking from one grocery store to another looking for dark tuna packed in oil, for a pasta dish I had planned to make. Everywhere I went, I found shelves lined with light tuna, white tuna, albacore tuna, all packed in water, the store managers baffled by my simple request. I finally gave up and went on the Internet—the market of necessity for many similarly frustrated Nashville cooks.

Now if I want dark tuna packed in oil, I can purchase it by the jar at The Italian Market, or by the tin at Corrieri’s. I’ll likely go to the latter since it is in my neighborhood. But proximity is the least of the reasons to visit this wonderful new resource for imported cheeses and meat; canned, jarred, bottled and frozen products; and freshly made breads, soups and sandwiches.

Located behind MAFIAoZA’s on Caruthers Avenue, Corrieri’s is the latest enterprise of the principals behind that popular pizzeria and bar: Mike Dolan, Lars Kopperud and chef Brett Corrieri, who has lent the store both his name and his passion for the foods he grew up with. What was once a dilapidated, 1940s-era bungalow has been beautifully renovated and transformed into three cozy rooms painted in warm hues common to the Italian countryside; windows sparkle, wooden floors gleam. The interior, overseen by Corrieri’s wife Bethany, is absolutely splendid, but it is the colorful products themselves that dazzle the eye and whet the appetite.

Foodies might want to grab a napkin off the front counter to catch the drool as they peruse the vast, but very select, inventory. The deli counter and cases are in the front room of the store, which still has the original—though not working—fireplace. In one case are meats—among them three types of prosciutto, mortadella and sopressata—and in the other, 25 to 35 different types of cheeses. One of Corrieri's favorites is the Rogue Smokey Blue Cheese; along with imports from Italy, Spain and Greece, the store is also carrying Tennessee-made Sweetwater Valley cheeses.

Six sandwiches are on the board. The 10K Lira touts itself as a real Italian sub, and Corrieri gets no argument from me. Wrap your mouth around this divine creation—prosciutto cotto, salame toscano, mortadella, copa, sopressata, provolone, mozzarella, spinach and peppadew peppers on a thick slice of focaccia drizzled with balsamic vinegar, olive oil, kosher salt, freshly cracked black pepper and Italian seasonings—and you'll be singing opera before you swallow the last scrumptious bite. There are four others: Caprese, Pan Bagna, Sir Signore and El Mucca, the last of these made with dark tuna and no mayo. All are priced at \$5.50 for a half, \$9.95 for a whole; the half is actually large enough for a single serving. The Capretti is geared toward children with discerning palates—mortadella with pistachio, provolone, homemade mayonnaise and Dijon on Tuscan loaf—and is one-price-fits-all, at \$4.50.

Another case holds cold drinks; two tasty treats to check out, both from Italy, are Sanpellegrino Chinotto and Moka Drink. Also in that case are blocks of Delitia butter, which comes from the same region where Parmigiano Reggiano is made.

The other rooms are stocked with specialty items that range from dry pasta and vinegars to Marcona almonds, jars of sweet olive jam and Riedel glasses. In a freezer case are pastas, desserts, fava beans, porcini mushrooms, and heat-and-eat entrées and pizzas from Mafiaoza's.

Corrieri's stands ready to fill your holiday and entertaining needs with cheese and meat trays: a Happy Hour tray of three cheeses and house-made crostini is \$19.99, and on the upper end, the \$119.99 Primi After 7 Tray presents three meats, four cheeses, white truffle honey, white bean hummus, Kalamata olive tapenade, crostini, lavash and baguettes. The market will assemble the items on your tray if you drop it off the night before.

There is currently no seating indoors, but if you can brave the chill, there are a few tall tables in the front yard along with stools and heaters; a regulation-sized bocce court has been dug on the side lot. Now, *that's* Italian.

Corrieri's Formaggeria is at 1110 Caruthers Ave. 385-9272. Open 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Tues.-Sat., with wholesale hours from 10 to 11 a.m. for members of the trade only.