

AZ Insider: Behind the Scenes of Lou Malnati's Phoenix!

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket

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Kathy Shayna Shocket has an inside view of the stories that make headlines.



Kathy chats exclusively with the owner of Chicago's famous pizzeria.

Yes, Phoenix will soon be getting a piece of the Chicago pie! The **Lou Malnatis'** pie that is.

Behind the scenes, owner **Marc Malnati** and his team have been busy. VIPs and his celebrity friends, including **Joe Girardi**, manager of the **New York Yankees** (pictured above with **Marc Malnati** and wife **Jeanne Malnati**) stopped by to preview what's expected to be an Arizona hot spot.

Malnati's has already hired 175 employees for its first Phoenix location on the corner of Central and Camelback in the remodeled Uptown Plaza. "And five of our employees have relocated from Chicago to Phoenix, and have purchased homes here," reveals **Marc**.

There's much fanfare surrounding the opening and anticipation is building for that Malnati's signature delicious deep-dish. Not to mention their other popular menu choices that Chicagoans have been noshing on since 1971. That's when **Lou Malnati** and his wife **Jean Malnati** opened the first restaurant in Lincolnwood, Illinois.



Mayor Greg Stanton also stopped by, days before the opening to visit with Marc Malnati and his team. The 175 new jobs and economic impact is "favorable" for the Valley," **Mayor Greg** told me. Pictured above with the Mayor and Marc is **Mike Sterner** a longtime Malnatis exec who just moved his family from Chicago to Phoenix to build the Malnati's brand in Arizona.

Inspired by the mid-century modern renovation of Phoenix's historic Uptown Plaza strip mall, the eatery boasts a nostalgic style with neon lights and retro artwork, a bar and a large outdoor patio.



Marc Malnati explains that customers have been asking for a Phoenix location for years. He listened! And along with the fact of Phoenix's large numbers of Chicago transplants, Malnati's team agreed on Phoenix as its first location outside Chicagoland.



Some had the chance to experience the Chicago classic for the routine pre-soft openings, and check out how the new staff were honing their pizza skills. As of May 16, you can check it out yourself. The corner of Camelback and Central! (I highly recommend the pizza with only veggies called "The Lou" named after **Lou Malnati** himself!

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"Phoenix pizza lovers will have the same Chicago pizza experience," promises Marc. To ensure that replication, Lou Malnati's Pizzeria is employing a water-filtration system in Phoenix and importing ingredients.

Bon appetit!



Kathy Shayna Shocket is a freelance Writer, and TV- Field Producer based in Phoenix, AZ. The former **TV-Reporter** has written for publications such as **TIME Magazine**, **Money Magazine**, **PEOPLE Magazine**, **The HollywoodReporter** and **The NEW YORK TIMES**. You can reach her at redcarpetgirl@aol.com