

Tipica opens a new chapter in Utah's food history

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In the hands of chef Adam Kreisel, every bit of food has the capacity not only for an exceptional first life but also an equally great second one. In the hands of Tony and Matt Caputo, father-and-son leaders of the internationally distinguished eponymous [market and deli](#), the opportunity for presenting a profoundly innovative dining experience not only remarkable for its elegant simplicity but also for being affordable and accessible to a customer base growing more confident with a culture of genuinely sustainable food is about to be realized.

When Tipica - A Caputo Project opens May 6 near the corner of 300 S and 300 W, this casual restaurant will unleash a new wave in the Salt Lake City dining industry. Among other milestones, it will be Utah's first nose-to-tail restaurant, where eventually every part of the animal will make its way onto the limited but always changing menu.

Tipica also will feature dishes in which every single ingredient is sourced either by a Utah sustainable food grower or producer scrupulously vetted by Kreisel and the Caputos, a regional producer with equivalent sustainable practices, or the pantry of exceptional foods that made Caputo's an award-winning retailer of specialty foods in the first place.

This will include Kreisel's fresh pasta, risotto and polenta dishes featuring hand-milled grains and flours as well as the eclectic ever-rotating offerings of appetizers, salads, and desserts. The menu will reflect the growing seasons in their rightful natural cyclical evolution as well.

Their passionate love of food also will find its voice in the decor which Matt Caputo describes as "industrial meets modern," marked with warm reds and yellows in curtains neither sheer nor opaque, earth tones, cream-colored tablecloths, and lights on the trees as well as simple votive candles on the table. Every touch is wisely chosen for the purpose of comfortably inviting diners to experience the benefits of truly great sustainable food. Underscoring this is a menu where all items range between \$6 and \$19.

In many respects, Tipica is a bold, disruptive innovation. Opening at a time when the economy still teeters in the midst of a brutalizing recession, the restaurant serves to become an essential portal, a welcoming catalyst for the Salt Lake City and Utah food communities where the challenge of producing spirit-lifting nutritious food in environmentally responsible conditions parallels that of making it available especially to those who are acutely mindful of budgeting their day-to-day living expenses.

And, in the hands of a self-effacing Kreisel, who nonetheless exhibits that critical sense of courageous confidence to extract the best from every ounce of animal flesh, vegetable and grain, there is the wonderful point of interaction for the diner to see truly why a simple ragout, lamb kidney salad, or tongue soup opens up a portfolio of potentially mind-blowing, life-transforming tastes.

“We believe this is the right time for this restaurant,” Caputo says, adding “that as we have positioned ourselves over the last four to five years, we are eager to leverage our brand for taking on this important component of our responsibility toward a sustainable food mission.”

For Adam, who is as unequivocally committed to changing perceptions about the food industry, the opportunity to collaborate so intensively with the Caputo enterprise represents a “major luxury in the industry.” Here, he not only “feeds his tapeworm” when it comes to his love of the Italian culinary arts but also he is the chief empiricist in an experiment that will compel the local food industry — suppliers and restaurants included — to think about their own business models amid a gradually transforming food landscape.

Even the restaurant’s name — Tipica — evokes that total freedom of culinary expression. Tipica signifies a designation created for Italian wine producers in the 1970s when a line of Super Tuscan wines, refined in terms of being far superior to cheap table wines, emerged. Even as some of the newer Super Tuscan wines have been deemed worthy of pricier designations (e.g. DOCG), some producers have opted to keep the Tipica designation, completely satisfied with the benefit of an international reputation and with the fully endowed capacity to produce bold, powerful wines in a completely unhindered environment.

Tipica exemplifies the classic model of a disruptive innovation business. First, there is the Caputo family’s full-scale commitment to venture into the “blue ocean” of an unrealized, uncontested market where diners have the chance to experience Utah’s first nose-to-tail restaurant. For example, the restaurant’s decor has been planned to accentuate the customer-centric theme underlying the fundamental approach of cuisine and taste taken by Kreisel and the Caputos who have refined relentlessly dishes to perfection that will grace Tipica’s menu.

Second, there are the crowdsourcing benefits of bringing deeply based talents to the enterprise. Kreisel came on board early on to learn and study the incredible inventory and pantry that has distinguished Caputo’s leadership in the city and region as a specialty food store. By working so closely at hand, Kreisel has seen why the price value-quality paradigm is such a successful component of the Caputo brand.

Third, there is the consensus that customers deserve the best, especially at a time when the common business reaction, fearful of risk during a volatile economy, is to delay or hesitate when it comes to innovation. The question becomes of how to avoid the mistake of failure. “The last thing our family would want to do is make the ‘mistake’ of getting into the restaurant business because it consumes so much of your time, resources, and effort,” Matt says. “However, in Adam’s extraordinarily capable hands, we see that opportunity to be at the forefront and not to rest on our laurels.”

Tipica will open at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays through Saturdays. Beer and wine will be available. Reservations can be made by calling (801) 328-0222.