



'We're pivoting pretty fast,' Cibo Divino puts it into survival gear, community focus

March 24, 2020
By Rachel Stone

Whatever the Puleos have for dinner tonight, customers can eat too.

"You can't eat pizza three times a week, so we're going to broaden our menu and give people items they can cook at home to keep them occupied," says Christina Puleo, who owns Cibo Divino Marketplace with her husband, Daniele.

The restaurant, which opened at Sylvan Thirty almost five years ago, is known for pizza, but it's also a market and wine shop with grab-and-go items and Eatzì's-style food to go. The Puleos plan to use all of that to their advantage in reworking their business to fit the needs of their post-coronavirus neighborhood.

"We're pivoting pretty fast. We're in full production mode," Christina says.

Their kitchen is producing frozen pizzas, meal kits and family meals, as well as things like vacuum-sealed chickens, fresh uncooked pasta and house-made sauce by the jar. They're also expanding to include more affordable options.

The Puleos, who live in Kessler Park, had to lay off most of their staff.

"We're keeping margins as low as possible," she says. "There are plenty of people who are worried about work, who are food insecure, and my heart goes out to them. We're taking all of that into consideration when making decisions."

When we spoke on Sunday, Christina had gone shopping at a supermarket across the bridge, and the experience shook her.

"I want to stay in the neighborhood. I don't want to go anywhere," she says. "We're very sensitive and particular and totally safe with food-handling. I trust our food and how we handle it and how we prepare it."

The Puleos opened a second location in Downtown Dallas a few years ago, and that one is closed, but it has a production kitchen that Christina says she would like to put into use to provide meals for people who are out of work. For now, she and Daniele, whose entire family lives in Italy, are working on an online store and planning virtual events such as wine tastings.

"We can do it," Christina says. "Survival mentality."