

# WHAT'S ON



Claudio Vescovo and Gianluca D'Angelo are opening Berto on Holloway Road from August 31.

## Zia Lucia owners expand next door

**Holloway Road is a special place for Claudio Vescovo and Gianluca D'Angelo. It was here, at number 157 precisely, that they opened their first Zia Lucia pizzeria in 2016, and three years later they are about to unveil Berto: a fresh pasta restaurant next door.**

"It's good to keep growing in Holloway Road," says Vescovo. "We're pleased to be a part of the development of this area because it's a street we love."

While Zia Lucia has expanded across London – the duo have since opened restaurants in Hammersmith and Wembley, with a fourth site planned in Aldgate East – Berto is a new venture, specialising in "intricately created and simply served fresh pasta, made on-site daily."

"Our vision is always the same: to deliver and provide the best quality product at an affordable price, this underpins the culture we have," explains D'Angelo.

"We don't just want to grow for the sake of growing. (This is about) really being able to share and spread what we love. All the places we are opening, we are thinking of the customers – is this really what our neighbours want? We have been staying away from the high streets, we want to go somewhere where there's a need."

With all dishes priced between £8 and £13, hand-crafted pastas including fresh egg tagliatelle and pappardelle, vegan picci, gnocchi and ravioli will be

After their Holloway Road pizzeria proved such a hit, the founders of Zia Lucia introduce a neighbouring pasta restaurant

on the menu, with different pastas made using traditional, wholemeal and gluten-free flours. Much like Zia Lucia – which is inspired by the home cooking of D'Angelo's aunt – Berto is based on a real person.

"He's a guy who has been working for around 25 years in the pasta craft – he has a shop north of Rome and is a friend of both Gianluca and I," continues Vescovo.

"It's a very small shop where he hand-crafts all the pasta. He uses very old and authentic techniques, but it is phenomenal."

"We are using all of the knowledge that he has built over 25 years; he lives north of Rome but he is very much part of the project. He's not just going to train our chefs and move away, he will be an ongoing partner. It's great to have him on board."

Berto will launch on the final Saturday of this month with 50 per cent off food until Friday, September 6. The 45-cover restaurant will carry wines "from Sicily to Piedmont," as well as cocktails, and beers from the nearby Hammerton Brewery.

Vescovo and D'Angelo – originally from Venice and Rome respectively – have lived in Islington for 11 years and are keen to champion their gluten-free

menu at their latest eatery.

"It's the same thinking behind Zia Lucia; everyone thinks pizza is just pizza, but we wanted to challenge that assumption," says D'Angelo. "There are different types of flours and different experiences for the customer to have."

Vescovo expands on this. "What we dislike is that some places offer gluten-free because you *have* to have them. We don't believe that they put so much effort in to making it a good product. We wanted to open this (restaurant) but if we didn't have amazing gluten-free options, we wouldn't open at all."

At Berto, the pasta bar will be a focal point of the room. "If I think about my youth," Vescovo recalls, "when you go and have a big meal with your grandmother cooking, everything will be there. You will see her doing the pasta and bringing your food (to the table), you see the entire process."

"We want people to connect to the food, you get that if you see the whole process from scratch. For us that whole sort of experience is crucial. It connects us with our customers."

Dan Splarn

**Berto, 155 Holloway Rd, N7 8LX. Soft launch from August 31. More: [berto.uk](http://berto.uk)**



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