

to the difference in protein level, the way this flour performs in making dough may vary from the way the imported "00" flours perform.

When making "true" Italian-style breads there are some purists who will say that only real Italian flour, such as the Caputo or 5 Stagioni brands should be used. To some extent there might be some truth to this, but you have to admit that here in the U.S., these Italian made flours are the new kids on the block. Italian bakers have been making some pretty decent Italian breads with the domestic flours that have been available to bakers here for a good many years now.

"In Roseland, Illinois, where my first wife grew up, there was a dominant Italian population comprised largely of Italian immigrants," said Tom Lehmann "My wife was one of the second-born generations here in the U.S. Since most of the older generation was used to working with ingredients both in the bakery and at home that were common to them back in Italy, they actively sought out ingredients that were similar to those they were used to using back home in Italy."

"One of these ingredients happened to be a brand of flour called Ceresota. This flour was sold through food stores and retail distributors for use in the hotel and restaurant trade. Ceresota flour was so similar to the flour that the old, Italian bakers and housewives were accustomed to using that they readily embraced it, and used it for most of their baking needs."

Ceresota, 5 Stagioni and Caputo brand flours have a lower protein level than many of the commonly used bread type flours, and as a result, the doughs they produce are not as difficult to handle or shape as the doughs made from higher-protein bread-type flours. Today, Ceresota brand flour is still a very dominant flour in the Chicago region, and even though Caputo brand flour is now available, old habits can be difficult to break.

If you're thinking about producing some authentic, Italian baked goods, you now have the option of purchasing the "real thing" in one of several imported Italian-brand flours, or one of the lower-protein bread flours such as General Mills King Wheat, or other brand equivalents. It's now easy to make great tasting breads with the "old world" texture and appearance that's so rapidly becoming popular amongst consumers everywhere. Unlike bakers and pizzeria operators of the past, today we have a wonderful selection of authentic ingredients to choose from as well—flour, tomatoes, cheese, meats—you name it. When it comes to Italian bread-making, you can now be as "authentic" as you want to be, or your customers demand that you be. Once again, to gain more insight into authentic Italian flour milling, the processes it employs, tours of factories and interviews with Antimo Caputo (Caputo Flour) and Riccardo Aquigiaro (5 Stagioni), go to PizzaTV.com.

PMQ's Pizza Magazine



See exclusive tours of the Italian flour companies Caputo and 5 Stagione at www.pizzatv.com

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