



# BUILDING A PIZZA EMPIRE AND EXPANDING IN CALIFORNIA



## **“Heirloom Pizza — it’s our baby.”**

That’s how Michael Foley, owner of the 5-year-old pizzeria, describes his business. He and his partner, Kristen Wood, combined a passion for pizza with a desire to be closer together — and that’s how they created Heirloom Pizza for the community in Monterey, California.

Heirloom’s beginnings started back in Michael’s college days, when he worked as a delivery driver for various pizzerias. Michael climbed his way up the pizza ladder, learning the ins and outs of the industry as he prepared to open his own restaurant. Michael’s old boss at Little Star Pizza in San Francisco became a mentor of sorts to the self-described “pizza guy” who needed to learn a little about running a business, too.

Then he met Kristen.

Ten years ago, the couple began a long-distance relationship. As Michael prepared to become a business owner, he and Kristen decided to take a leap of faith as well and move closer together.

And so, Heirloom Pizza was born, and since then, it’s become a staple of Monterey, earning itself “Best Of ...” honors and a loyal base of customers. As business grows, so does the need to open more Heirloom Pizza locations, and just this past year, Michael and Kristen finalized plans for a location in Salinas, California.

“There are a lot of unknowns, really,” Michael says. “If it was easy, everyone would do it. I always say, ‘Even if you think it’s fun, it’s not easy!’ I love the pizza business, and we have a good time.”

Heirloom Pizza is a Chicago-style pizzeria with an atmosphere designed to encourage patrons to sit, eat, sip, and stay a while. Michael explains that their pizza style is



unlike anything patrons will experience for miles around, and the goal is to create a peaceful, welcoming space for all diners. You can even see that mission of peace right in the Heirloom logo — something Michael wanted when creating the business.

In Salinas, Michael and Kristen hope to add to a growing landscape of businesses in the community. Heirloom Pizza is leasing a former fabric warehouse from a local real estate owner and a farmer who are looking to reinvigorate downtown Salinas. For its part, Heirloom Pizza will continue to offer the same great dishes and atmosphere, but it will also have the space for a Tiki bar, live music, and banquets. Kristen explains that the banquet space will accommodate parties of 30-100 people, and Michael is most excited about the live music aspect of the space.

As they build their own pizza empire, Kristen said they're looking for the right people to help them with their goals.

"We're looking forward to expanding the staff culture that we've been creating here," Kristen says. "We've worked with so many of our [current] staff from the very beginning. We've been so lucky here at this restaurant to have dedicated staff who care about customers and care about food."

Scholl & Company has been proud to join Heirloom Pizza as it has grown, starting all the way at the very beginning. Michael hired our team to assist Heirloom



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with full-service accounting needs, allowing Michael and Kristen to focus on the ways in which they can expand their business and name.

"Money is what makes everything work, so we rely on Scholl & Company to be a backbone to our business practice," Kristen explains.

As Michael and Kristen look ahead to the future of Heirloom Pizza, Michael's 17 years of experience in the pizza industry help him understand that the secret to having a successful pizzeria starts with having a quality pie.

"I think people appreciate that," Michael says. "People can see the quality and the value. That's what the brand has come to be known for."

*You can visit Heirloom Pizza at 700 Cass St. #102, Monterey. You can also learn more at [HeirloomPizzaPie.com](http://HeirloomPizzaPie.com). Look for their newest location in Oldtown Salinas in 2023!*