



CLASSIC SALAD BAR

Round Two

By Danny Fairchild

So Peosta has become a pretty cool hang, huh? Are you the kind to hangout with a cup of coffee and a laptop? They got a good place for that. Are you the kind to chill with some friends and a beer? There's a place for you, too. Want to add a few games of bowling to the mix? Well then looky what we have here! We have Round Two, a bowling alley and so much more. Round Two promises three things: Food. Drinks. Fun. And I'm here to tell you, they deliver all three. It's the *pièce de résistance* of a good time. Or, if I may, the *Peosta résistance*. Heh. Heh-heh. You have no idea how long I've been sitting on that one.

I brought my family to Round Two on the last day of winter break for one last day of fun before the kiddos got back to the books. I, um... wasn't the only one to have that idea. It was a bit of a madhouse, really. It was crazy busy. But even so, if we were bowling people, there were still a few lanes open, and there were still table options open for us in the restaurant. It took a little Pac-Manning between the other tables to get to those tables, but like I said, it was busy. It was busy, but nobody was waiting for anything.

I want to get my assessment of the bathrooms out of the way because I'm super impressed. It was one of their busiest days with kids all over the place. You'd HAVE to expect that the bathrooms were an absolute mess. I expected it, I confess. I've been to enough children's museums to not only expect a terrifying bathroom, but

to completely overlook it. No need. Round Two opened in 2020, but their men's room was pristine. Not even a bunch of paper towels half-assedly tossed in the general direction of the trash can by kids eager to get back to their lanes. Everything was clean in both appearance and smell.

That's not to say Round Two is strictly a kids' place. It's a family place. But also, bowling alleys have bars. And a bar is a bar. Anyway, you know what I mean. This is the Midwest. You know how bowling alleys work. I'm not here to talk about the bowling alley. I'm here to talk about the food. Because that's where Round Two goes beyond the burgers, hot dogs, and onion rings of your normal bowling alley. In fact, let me ask you a question that deserves its own paragraph indentation:

Do you miss lunch buffets?

Yeah? Sad to see them so sparse these days? Sorry to bring up such a sore subject. And you can blame COVID all you want, but buffets were on their way out well before that. Bishop's has been closed for over 10 years. Even casinos were already starting to get rid of their buffets.

But I have good news...

When you go to Round Two and look at the menu, you may notice something. The menu has the exact same graphic design and most of the same items as Shot Tower Inn in Dubuque. Other than business logos, they're almost identical but 'cept... what's this? A daily lunch buffet?

Now... pay attention because this is important. My love of Shot Tower Inn chicken dinners is well documented (Ed: see issue #420, Oct. 27–Nov. 9, food fans!). And everybody knows that a buffet is only as good as its fried chicken. And so when I came to find out that the same fine people who give us Shot Tower Inn's broasted chicken are giving us the same awesome chicken at a buffet where I can eat as



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much of that chicken as I want? I knew at that moment how I was meant to die.

So we're already starting at a good place with the chicken, yeah? But you forget that Shot Tower Inn, and therefore Round Two, is also known for pizza. And here's what I love about Shot Tower Inn pizza, fellows: They cheese the whole pie, not just the center. There's little-to-no

pizza bones to give to your dog, which you probably shouldn't do anyway. In fact, they cheese MORE than the whole pizza, which means you're getting a nice random crust of burnt cheese around the outside of your pizza. I'm only a minor fanatic for burnt cheese like that. Some people are absolute terrorist suspects for burnt cheese like that. And again, imagine eating as much

as you want. Imagine being able to pick the piece with the best burnt cheese cheese edge each time you go up there.

So chicken and pizza. Chicken pizza. Chichén Itzá. Oh, hey! That's a thing! The chicken and pizza are as epic as Chichén Itzá. Probably. Never been.

So yeah! Chicken and pizza. But are you going to just walk past everything else on the buffet? Because you're missing some stuff. On the day I went, they had poutine on the buffet. For those of you who don't know, poutine (pronounced poo-teen) is a plate of French fries and cheese curds smothered in a brown gravy. In most places in the poutine world, the cheese curds aren't deep fried, but you can bet your tangy little caboose that they're usually deep fried around here. And they are deep fried at Round Two. So yeah! Not healthy! But darn clever to make it a buffet item. I've never seen that on a buffet before.

Speaking of clever stuff on the buffet: Remember back in the buffet times when you would go to ladle some salad dressing on your greens and the dressing compartments looked like a Pollock painting with other salad dressings dripped and splattered into other salad dressings? Sometimes it worked out fine, like if you got a mix of ranch and Western brand French dressing. Other times it was a nightmare. Round Two must have looked at a Subway Sandwiches fixins counter and said, "Huh!" Because the salad dressings are each contained in their own squeeze bottles. No mixed up salad dressings unless you want to!

The salad bar portion of the buffet is everything you've been missing. That chocolate pudding that ONLY tastes good when it comes from a salad bar. Cheese crumbles, egg crumbles, bacon crumbles. All things crumbled! Plus pasta salads! Can't cop out on pasta salads.

I've been listing all this stuff that is far from healthy for you so you're probably thinking that this salad bar only has iceberg lettuce. And iceberg lettuce is pointless. Well here's what: This is a classic salad bar so yes, iceberg lettuce is going to be the largest and easiest to reach option. But it's still 2023. So you got your real greens in the form of some nice baby spinach. And I said this is a CLASSIC salad bar. So feel yourself transported by putting your salad in one of those classic wooden bowls that were always stacked up and ready to go.

So that's what we're looking at here. If you like to bowl, everything looks pretty darn state-of-the-art. They even have a pro shop. If you like video games, there's lots of things to virtually race and/or kill. And if you miss your pre-apocalypse buffet, you can't do much better. ■



Round Two
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Hours: Sun–Thu: 11 AM–9 PM;
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