

BIG BILL'S SANDWICH SHOP

BY RICH BELMONT

Many Galena residents are so happy to have this sandwich shop and coffee house open in what was for a while a lonely and vacant space in one of Galena's most historic buildings. That's because the coffee is excellent and the sandwiches are top notch. And also because the Logan House is once again a vibrant and comfortable meeting place.

You see, Big Bill's Sandwich Shop and Coffee Bar is inside the building at the corner of Main and Franklin Streets known as the Logan House. It was constructed in 1853 by Henry Logan for his restaurant, bar and hotel. In 1879 the building was burned to the ground and was rebuilt.

The beautiful bar was used in the filming of the Chisolm Tavern scene in the 1989 movie *Field of Dreams* adapted from W.P. Kinsella's novel *Shoeless Joe* starring Kevin Costner and Amy Madigan. In recent years the Logan House (whose sign is still on the building) has been home to Café Italia, an antique store, Char Obrien's, Ayala's Mex-American Steakhouse, and now Big Bill's Sandwich Shop.



The shop is co-owned by Jack Deiter who is only 20 years old. He named it in honor of his grandfather who is a businessman who taught Jack a lot about business. And besides, Jack's father is also William who goes by Bill.

Jack's dad, Bill Deiter is co-owner. He and Jack's mom, Michelle, reside in River Forest, IL where Bill owns several businesses. Jack's mom was one of President Ronald Reagan's personal photographers. She is the professional photographer who took the photos hanging in the restaurant. (Michelle Deiter Photography, 708-969-0708) Years ago Bill and Michelle purchased a summer home in Galena. It is the 22nd oldest home in the city and it is where Jack now lives.

Jack attended Saint Louis University where he studied Entrepreneurship. He opened the sandwich shop on October 10, 2015.



He is doing well and he attributes this to his experienced manager and mentor, Constance Chambers. She was the owner of the now closed Railway Café in Galena. If you are familiar with Galena you might recall Railway Café was a much loved coffee bar

and bistro serving gourmet sandwiches and organic salads. In fact all of the Railway Café original, highly popular specialties including the "famous" Railway Café Cranberry Chicken Salad are served at Big Bill's Sandwich Shop.

The coffee is as good as coffee gets and the specialty drinks are outstanding. My favorite is the Café Mocha made with espresso, premium coco melted into espresso and steamed milk and topped with whipped cream. The Cappuccino/Latte is prepared with espresso, hot milk and steamed milk foam and is also a favorite of many regulars. So is the Caramel Iced Latte.

Constance started working at Starbucks 27 years ago so she truly understands what it takes to produce exceptional coffee drinks. Making a Mocha or Cappuccino or Espresso may look easy but it is actually a complicated process requiring a certain level of expertise. As a talented professional Constance understands good coffee requires several things: high quality coffee beans; great tasting water; professional



CRANBERRY CHICKEN SALAD



roasting, grinding and steaming equipment; and the proper training of the baristas making the coffee.

Jack and Constance have wisely chosen a very good coffee bean supplier, namely Metropolis Coffee Company of Chicago. Metropolis has won many awards including:

- Two Time Gold Medal Winner (Good Food Awards 2015)
- Best Coffee 2014 (Good Food Awards 2014)
- Top Five Summer Coffees 2013 (*Men's Health Magazine*)
- Micro Roaster of the Year 2007 (*Roast Magazine*)

(Fun Fact: The coffee bean is really not a bean. It is the pit or seed inside the fruit of the coffee tree which is really a type of cherry tree).

Preparing exceptional coffee is not easy and entails five professional standards:

1. Espresso
2. Latte Milk Steaming
3. Cappuccino Milk Steaming
4. Milk Management
5. Flavoring Consistency



Big Bill's Coffee Bar makes consistently good coffee because Jack and Constance have mastered these five standards. (More Fun Facts: It takes 4,000 coffee beans to make one pound of coffee. The average coffee tree only produces one to two pounds of roasted coffee per year).



Big Bill's coffee is roasted right on the premises and is made with sophisticated, precise and expensive equipment including the Phoenix Oro 5 Roasting Machine that evenly roasts beans and has a high power cooling system to lock in flavor, and the La Marzocco Espresso Machine ensuring consistent pressure control.



The Breakfast Sandwiches are all first rate. The Bill's Benedict contains Black Forest Ham, Cheddar Cheese, Egg and Hollandaise on a toasted English Muffin. The Sausage and Gouda Cheese on a Croissant Bun is really good and so is my

new favorite: The Fully Loaded. This one has Egg, Chorizo, Pork Sausage Patty, Pepper Jack Cheese on a toasted English Muffin. This is the first time I have ever had a Chorizo Patty and I must say it is a little spicy hot and extremely tasty!

There are two soups every day. Usually one is a vegetarian soup and the other contains meat. Some examples of recent soups are the homemade vegan Roasted Butternut Squash and Pear soup, Santa Fe Chicken, Roasted Red Pepper, Split Pea and Tomato Bisque.

There are some great salads on the menu, too. The most popular is the "famous" Cranberry Chicken Salad on a bed of organic greens drizzled with a Cranberry Citrus Vinaigrette. I recommend adding optional toasted walnuts to this salad.

Big Bill's Sandwich Shop is so named for a good reason. It serves great sandwiches!

First of all, white, wheat and pumpernickel breads are baked in-house every day. Then flavor compatible quality meats and cheeses are stuffed between two slices of that bread. There are several gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan and organic options available. Some of the sandwich standouts are:

Roast Beef & Cheese – hormone-free beef with your choice of sharp white cheddar, smoked Gouda, Big-Eye Swiss or pepper jack cheese on white bread. I highly recommend adding the optional house sauce. This is a Bistro sauce made with Grey Poupon Dijon mustard and Horseradish.

Black Forest Pretzel – Black Forest Ham and smoked Gouda topped with a mustard slaw on a pretzel bun.



Corned Beef & Swiss on Pumpernickel – several slices of premium corned beef and Big-Eye Swiss topped with mustard slaw.

Spicy Peanut Chicken – free-range hormone-free chicken breast tossed in a spicy peanut sauce with toasted walnuts and red onions on a ciabatta roll.



Beefy Roman – this is one of the old Railway Café most requested sandwiches and is certainly my favorite! Hormone-free roast beef with thick slices of fresh mozzarella cheese, roasted red peppers, baby spinach and delicious sweet basil pesto, balsamic vinaigrette on a ciabatta roll. All these flavors go very well together and make for an unusually tasty sandwich.

(Fun Fact: The Beefy Roman was chosen as one of the Top 11 Sandwiches in the whole state of Illinois. This was noted in an **OnlyInYourState.com** article titled *Eleven Illinois Sandwiches You Have To Try Before You Die*, January 20, 2017 by Amanda Glandon).

Big Bill's Sandwich Shop & Coffee Bar has several tables and also sofas so you can meet your friends, drink excellent coffee, have a great sandwich and relax while you talk over the day's events.

BIG BILL'S SANDWICH SHOP

301 N. MAIN ST. (CORNER OF MAIN & FRANKLIN),
GALENA, IL 61036 • 815-777-6979
FACEBOOK.COM/BIGBILLSSANDWICHSHOP

Hours: Mon: 7 AM–3 PM; Tues: Closed;
Wed–Fri: 7 AM–3 PM; Sat: 8 AM–4 PM; Sun: 10 AM–3 PM

Dining Style: Coffee Bar & Sandwich Shop:

Come as you are

Noise Level: Conversational

Recommendations: All Coffees; Café Mocha; Caramel Iced Latte; Fully Loaded Breakfast Sandwich; Cranberry Chicken Salad; Soups of the Day; Beefy Roman; Spicy Peanut Chicken, Corned Beef & Swiss, Black Forest Pretzel Sandwiches

Liquor Service: None

Prices: Breakfast: \$4.99; Lunch: \$7–\$9.50

Pay Options: Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards, Checks

Accessibility: Front Door & Restrooms

Kids Policy: Menu: No, Booster: No, High Chair: Yes

Reservations: Yes • **Catering:** No • **Take Out:** Yes

Delivery: No • **Parking:** On Street