

# THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

BY RICH BELMONT

The restaurant in the Q Casino and Hotel was closed approximately four months. On Jan. 18, 2018 it was reopened and curious onlookers, like me, could see it had been transformed, as if by magic, into a real Farmhouse Kitchen!

Not since 2002 when the Smithsonian Institution recreated Julia Child's Cambridge, MA home kitchen has so much detail been added to a farm style commercial kitchen.

That's because a gifted and talented design team was brought in to do the interior decorating. Kris Gorton of Kris Gorton Design and owner of Living on Main in Dubuque and Adam and Dawn Eikamp, owners of Eikamp Arts, did the farmhouse makeover. Adam painted the artwork of local farm houses adorning the walls, Kris and Dawn came up with high sliding barn doors and several chandeliers made from clear soda bottles and one made from chicken coop wire!

The Farmhouse Kitchen is operated by an accomplished staff of experienced professionals. They include:

- John Torres, Director of Food & Beverage. He received his training at Washburne Culinary Institute in Chicago. He has been in the Food & Beverage Industry for 40 years and has learned from French Master Chefs at Maxim's de Paris and LaTour, both in Chicago. John holds a Bachelor's Degree in Art and an MBA from University of Dubuque. He is now in his 18<sup>th</sup> year at the Q Casino.
- Dave Masterson, Executive Chef. Dave has been cooking for 33 years. He started in Massachusetts and came up through the ranks. Dave moved to Dubuque and was Kitchen Manager at Cedars for 8 years. Dave has been at Q Casino for over 17 years and was promoted to his present position 2 years ago.
- Dustin Potter, Main Kitchen Sous Chef. He started cooking when he was 18. He cooked on the Diamond Jo Casino Riverboat then became a line cook and later a banquet chef at the Woodfire Grille.
- Ben Donovan, Farmhouse Sous Chef. Ben has a degree in Culinary Arts from Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, IA. He cooked at Loras College and the University of Dubuque and has been a Chef at Q Casino for over 2 and half years.
- Lisa Dalsing, Food & Beverage Manager. Lisa started working in the industry when she was 21 at the Silver Eagle Casino. She has now been with the Q Casino (formerly Mystique Casino) for 22 years.
- Wells Kaiser, Farmhouse Supervisor and Mixologist. He is from Cuba City, WI and has been in the Casino F & B Industry for 8 years.
- Tim Slade, Bartender. He is from Dubuque and has tended bar for 10 years, four of them at the Q Casino (formerly Mystique Casino).

The Farmhouse Kitchen Lounge is open from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day. It is a great place to try some expertly mixed craft cocktails. Here is just a sampling of some of the specialties:

- The Barn Burner – UV Sriracha, pickle juice, horseradish and homemade spicy Bloody Mary Mix.
- Q-Tini – Chambord, Bacardi Limon and pineapple juice finished with a “Q”, whatever that is.
- The Iowa Buck Tail – Iowa's Templeton Rye Whiskey, Saranac Ginger Beer and fresh lime.
- Blackberry Bourbon Smash – this is my favorite! Iowa Cedar Ridge Bourbon, fresh lime juice, blackberries, homemade simple syrup and club soda or ginger ale. I prefer the ginger ale and save the blackberry for the final sip!
- Wisconsin Old Fashioned – the Old Fashioned is considered American's first craft cocktail. All across the country an Old Fashioned is made with Bourbon, Irish or Rye Whiskey, bitters and sugar. However in Wisconsin the Old Fashioned is made



- Chicken Pot Pie – Velvety Chicken Supreme breasts are placed in a puff pastry pie crust. Onions, carrots and celery are sautéed in butter and added to the chicken stock and finished with heavy cream. (Fun Fact: Chicken Supreme is a term used to describe a boneless, skinless chicken breast. Velvety is a tasting term for lush, silky, smooth texture).

with Brandy and most Wisconsinites demand Korbel. So this cocktail is made with Korbel Brandy, orange, cherry, homemade bitters, sugar cube, homemade sour mix and soda water. (Fun Fact: experienced bartenders call the sweet or sour mixer a “wash”).

The Farmhouse Kitchen is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner every day and offers a Lunch Buffet on Saturday, Dinner Buffet on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday Brunch.

The food is just what you would expect if you were going to eat on a farm: it is high quality, plentiful and delicious.

The lunch offerings are all smaller portions of the dinner items. There are only four lunch entrées not on the dinner menu. They are:

- Club Sandwich – sliced turkey, bacon, tomatoes and lettuce in a triple decker.
- Open Faced Meatloaf – this is an excellent loaf made from straight beef, green peppers, onions, bread crumbs, eggs, Worcestershire sauce, chopped Italian herbs and a little ketchup and mustard.
- Open Faced Roast Beef – inside round beef cooked low and slow in an Alto Shaam Cook and Hold Oven. Served with beef gravy and Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes.
- Open Faced Carved Turkey – roasted turkey breast on seared white bread with turkey gravy and mashed potatoes.



The Dinner Menu has something for everybody. Starting with some of the appetizers the food gets interesting really quick. For example:

- Breaded Catfish Nuggets – lightly breaded chunks of catfish are flash fried with Cajun spices and served in a New Orleans style Rémolade (ray-muh-lahd).
- Fried Shrimp Cocktail – 5 Extra Jumbo Shrimps are hand breaded and tossed in Cajun seasonings and served with a homemade cocktail sauce.
- Smoked BBQ Pork Sliders – pork shoulder is smoked seven to eight hours in a gas fired wood chip smoker.
- Meatloaf Sliders – slices of meatloaf on Texas Toast make a surprisingly good appetizer.



The Soup and Salad section contains four salads and a soup of the day and the soup specialty: corn and ham chowder. This is a wonderful combination of chicken stock, mirepoix (meer-pwa consisting of chopped onions, carrots and celery) a Roux (roo equal parts flour and fat) with some ham, clarified butter, and when this cooks down, corn, diced potatoes and a lot of heavy cream added in. The Homestyle Entrées are all specialties in their own right. Each one has a story behind it. Some examples are:

- Chicken Dinner – hand battered and cooked under high pressure in a Broaster.
- Burgundy Beef Short Ribs – short ribs are short portions of meaty rib bones with a high percentage of connective tissue. They are floured and seared with red wine and mirepoix then covered in beef stock and mushrooms. They are slow braised 4 to 5 hours. Then finished with a burgundy wine reduction. The recipe for this dish is based on one from the New James Beard Cookbook.
- Bacon Wrapped Pork Tenderloin. This is Chef Ben's Specialty. He takes whole pork tenderloins wraps them in bacon and then sears them. They are served covered with a Smoked Gouda Cheese Cream Sauce.



The Farmhouse Kitchen is very proud of its Smokehouse Specialties. That's because Executive Chef Dave Masterson is an expert smoker. For the current menu he is doing:

- BBQ Chicken – flavored with a homemade dry rub and finished with homemade BBQ sauce.
- Beef Brisket – the beef is cut from the animals' lower chest so it is tough but so very flavorful when cooked right. Here it is roasted low and slow for over 12 hours and then smoked for another 2 hours.
- Apple and Cherrywood Smoked Baby Back Ribs. They are baked with a dry rub and then slathered with homemade BBQ sauce.

All of the Smokehouse platters are accompanied by homemade delicious corn bread. As much as I like the BBQ sauce I like to ask for it on the side so I can try the BBQ



sauces on the table. You will find a variety including:

- Tabasco Hot Sauce – made exclusively from Tabasco peppers, vinegar and salt.
- Pecanwood Smoke Bourbon Vanilla Sauce – is fruity, sweet and nutty.
- Cowtown Night of the Living – the heat comes from Chipotle purée and watch out it's hot!
- American Stockyard Harvest Apple – sweet and tart Washington apples with cane sugar, molasses, mild chilies and spice.

Of course, I always recommend you finish a great dinner with a fabulous dessert. The current choices are:

- Crème Brûlée (cream broo-lay)
- Double Chocolate Bundt Cake. This is my favorite: it's a chocolate cake with a hot fudge sauce!
- Peach Cobbler – it's just peachy.
- Cheesecake – a John Torres specialty. Very creamy and not too sweet.



Thank you Q Casino and Hotel for bringing us The Farmhouse Kitchen. Now we can all eat like happy, well-fed and satisfied farmers!

## THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

1855 GREYHOUND PARK RD, DUBUQUE, IA 52001  
563-582-6822 • QCASINOANDHOTEL.COM

**Hours:** Breakfast: Daily: 8-10:30 AM;  
Lunch: Mon-Sat: 11 AM-3 PM;  
Dinner: Sun-Thu: 5-9 PM; Fri-Sat: 5-10 PM;  
Buffet: Fri: 5-9 PM; Sat: 11 AM-3 PM & 5-9 PM;  
Brunch: Sun: 10 AM-3 PM; Lounge: Daily: 8 AM-11 PM;  
Lounge Appetizers: Daily: 11 AM-10 PM

**Dining Style:** Casual

**Noise Level:** Loud when busy

**Recommendations:** Farmhouse Omelets; Corn & Ham Chowder; Open Faced Meatloaf Sandwich; Open Faced Turkey Sandwich; Broasted Chicken; Bacon Wrapped Pork Tenderloin; Chicken Pot Pie; Broiled Cod; Smoked Baby Back Ribs; Smoked Beef Brisket; Iowa Pork Chop; Sirloin Steak; Ribeye Steak

**Liquor Service:** Premium Bar, Craft Cocktails; Wisconsin Old Fashioned

**Prices:** Breakfast: \$5-\$9; Lunch: \$8-\$20; Dinner: \$12-\$37

**Pay Options:** Cash, Debit, All Major Credit

Cards, NO Checks, ATM on premises

**Accessibility:** Ramp in Casino

**Kids Policy:** No one under 21 admitted

**Reservations:** Yes • **Catering:** No

**Take Out:** Yes • **Delivery:** No

**Parking:** Free Valet Parking or Large Private Lot



LISA DALSSING AND JOHN TORRES



DAVE MASTERSON



TIM SLADE, WELLS KAISER, AND BEN DONOVAN