



The Market House Restaurant

by Rich Belmont

When visiting The Market House Restaurant in Galena, IL the first question you might ask is where did the name come from? So please bear with me as I explain a little history here. Before the Civil War market houses were the equivalent of today's malls.

They were buildings housing farmer's markets and spaces where people could buy and sell food and merchandise. The Galena Market House was completed in 1846. It had 12 enclosed stalls each renting for \$50 per year. It also served as the Galena City Hall until 1938 and even contained 2 jail cells.

The Market House was mostly rebuilt in 1955 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Appropriately enough it is still located on Commerce Street. In 1982 three women established a tavern at the corner of Commerce and Perry right across the street from the Market House. It was only fitting they name their bar the Market House Tavern!

The menu was limited but the tavern quickly became known for Crab Louis Salad, Half Pound Burgers and Reuben Sandwiches (all pictured below). The ladies needed more space so two years later they moved the tavern to 204 Perry Street along the cobblestone road. The menu kept expanding so the name was changed to The Market House Restaurant. This new location is in one of the oldest buildings in Galena. It was built in 1836 for Captain Reuben Brush who was elected a Trustee of the Town of Galena on September 15, 1835.



This restaurant has two entrances. You can take the stairs from 120 North Main Street (nighttime image) directly across the street from the Elk's Lodge or enter at 204 Perry Street. Sometimes it is possible to find parking on Bench Street. Then you can walk down the ramp on Perry Street and avoid stairs entirely. It's a little unusual to find restaurants in this area with two ways in and out. I can recall several in New Jersey where I come from but then again they usually had an entrance for patrons and a second one that served more as an exit for Mafia....but that's another story.

It's a good idea to plan on arriving early and taking some time to look around. Order one of the 30 specialty mixed drinks with names like Muggy Maggie, Lolly's Lip Smacker, Rosie Fizz, Slo-Poke, Banana Split and Tennessee Mud.

Then check out the interesting tin ceiling and the beautiful solid mahogany bar in the Main Dining Room. The walls are adorned with splendid pictures that are all for sale and can be purchased from Mangelsen's Images of Nature on Main Street. You can also ask to be seated in the Garden Room. This space was originally an open patio surrounded by a high limestone and brick wall. A project to enclose it was completed in 1993.



The Market House Restaurant is owned by Laura DuBord (above at left). She worked for the first and second owners for over nine years. She started as a dishwasher and worked her way up to head chef. Then she purchased the business in 1998 and has been the proprietor for 14 years already. Laura is a fantastic cook in her own right but she credits her success to her Market House family. Her brother, Terry Hefel, was a cook in several Galena restaurants and actually started cooking in this one about 5 years before Laura joined the team. She also relies on two of her sisters, Rose Lilies and Peggy Engle and a sister-in-law, Chris Berning. Her kitchen is staffed by a team of two brothers and a sister Laura calls her "adopted family". They are Lupe, German and Mercedes Hernandez and they are all excellent cooks.



Laura has retained most of the original menu items and has added several lighter entrées, vegetarian, and gluten-free dishes. In fact, the menu has grown to seven pages. Don't worry, though, it is not at all complicated. It is broken down into sections: There are 7 appetizers, 5 burgers, 14 sandwiches, 9 house specialties, 9 vegetarian dishes, 13 salads and 19 entrées.

There are also Daily Features which remain the same from week to week. The lunch and dinner feature of the day are usually the same except the dinner version includes dinner salad and a cracker basket with homemade liver pâté and garlic parmesan butter spread. I was lucky to have had two of the specials and I can tell you they are a real treat. On a Monday I had a delicious Tuscan Potato Soup with large chunks of bacon and sausage. Then I had the Monday feature which is a Chicken Puffed Pastry. This is a delightful chicken pot pie filling simply served in a bowl with a puff pastry on top. Then on a Thursday I returned for Terry's Homemade Meatloaf. The all beef loaf (below) is mixed with Terry's secret seasonings and is topped with a mild tomato paste that compliments the beef exceedingly well.



The Market House Restaurant

204 Perry Street, Galena, IL 61036

815-777-0690 • www.MarketHouseRestaurant.com

HOURS: Mon – Sat: 11 am – 9 pm, Sun: Closed

ATMOSPHERE: Casual NOISE LEVEL: Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Burgers, Crab Louis Salad, Reuben, BBQ Ribs, Combo Cold Plate, Grilled Chicken Salad, Seafood Platter, Mac N Cheese w/bacon, Ham Steak, Flat Iron Steak, Specialty Mixed Drinks

LIQUOR SERVICE: Full bar, Specialty Mixed Drinks

PRICE RANGE: \$5 - \$27

PAY OPTIONS: Cash, Check, MasterCard, Visa, Discover

ACCESSIBILITY: From Bench Street to Perry Street Entrance, Restrooms

KIDS POLICY: Menu, Booster and Highchair available

RESERVATIONS: Yes (1 to 40)

CATERING: No TAKE OUT: Yes DELIVERY: No

PARKING: Parallel parking on Main Street & Bench Street

On Tuesday the feature is Terry's Homemade Goulash available all day. However, there is also another evening special: The Vegetable Shrimp Scampi. This is served over fettuccini with 21/25 count Jumbo size shrimp.

The Friday feature is Soup and Grilled Cheese Sandwich during the day and in the evening all you can eat Fried Chicken and Fried Fish. The Friday Fish Fry is very popular because it consists of 5 to 7 oz. Tilapia fillets. The Saturday special is the Cold Plate Lunch and the Grilled Seafood Platter Dinner. One of my dinner companions really enjoyed this dish! Lemon Pepper Scallops, Shrimp and your choice of either Salmon or Swordfish are char grilled and lightly brushed with a homemade Mediterranean Orange Glaze. This glaze is prepared from orange juice and spices which adds just the right touch of sweetness to the seafood.



The Market House is well known for its large selection of salads. Without a doubt the most popular is the House Specialty Crab Louis Salad. Shredded crab is mixed with brandy, real mayonnaise and in-house secret ingredients. We ordered this dish in a variation called the Crab Louis Melt. The salad is served warm and open faced on toasted marble rye bread topped with shredded Cheddar and Swiss cheese. Another popular salad is the Grilled Chicken (below) comprised of a specially seasoned breast topped with shredded Cheddar and raw onion. All the salads are served with your choice of homemade dressings. The Creamy Garlic Parmesan is the house dressing but you can also have Honey Mustard, Ranch, Bleu Cheese, Thousand Island and Creamy Dill.

The burgers are still made the same way they were in the 1982 Market House Tavern days. There are 5 Specialty Burgers to choose from in either quarter pound or half pound sizes. I always order the Half Pounders because they are only one dollar more! The patties are hand formed from 80/20 ground beef and grilled to order. They come with Crab Louis Salad and French Fries or Sweet Potato Fries or Homemade Potato Chips. The Cabernet Burger is the most popular. This is because the meat is marinated in cabernet wine with 7 spices.

The sandwiches are all available for either lunch or dinner. If you want to try something a little different I recommend the grilled, tender, juicy skin-on Duck Breast Sandwich. I also recommend the Reuben. The latter contains slow cooked corned beef brisket that is hand sliced with all fat removed. It is then covered with homemade Thousand Island dressing and Swiss cheese and served on marbled rye bread.

Tuna Salad and Chicken Salad Sandwiches are very popular too. You can choose from a large selection of breads including traditional white, wheat, marbled rye, Kaiser roll, buttery croissant, multi-grain flat bread or a tortilla.

The entrées are as delicious as they are entertaining. For example, the Ham Steak is a thick one pound cut of ham grilled and lightly brushed with a homemade Tuaca brown sugar glaze. The glaze is a mixture of brown sugar, triple sec, pineapple juice and Tuaca vanilla citrus liqueur.



The Mac N Cheese is exceptional in its own right. Bryce, the 365ink publisher, ordered this dish covered with bacon. He enjoyed it very much. But then again it's possible he only loved it because the macaroni and cheese was totally buried under a thick layer of bacon!



The BBQ Ribs are impressive. The meaty spare ribs are slow cooked at least 4 hours in a secret recipe BBQ sauce and then grilled and topped with more sauce.

The Combination Cold Plate is one of the most requested House Specialties. All 3 homemade salads: Crab Louis, Tuna and Chicken, are served on greens with shredded Cheddar Cheese, a tomato wedge, cucumber slice and hardboiled egg.

Again, if you are keen on trying something a little different the Flat Iron Steak is an excellent choice. This cut of beef is really a Top Blade Steak that used to be a wasted cut from the cow's shoulder. It's flavorful and quite tender but has tough connective tissue running through the middle. Beef researchers figured out a way to remove the inedible tissue. The result is a wonderful grilling steak that requires no seasoning. In fact the cooks at Market House simply grill and serve it open faced with toasted garlic bread. Incidentally this steak gets its name from its resemblance to an antique metal flat iron!



The staff at Market House is very friendly and there is no need to hurry. After a satisfying dinner you should stay for dessert. The signature dessert is the Mud Slide made with a warm homemade brownie, 4 scoops of vanilla ice cream, whipped topping and chocolate syrup. Another house specialty is the Cream Cheese Mousse. It's homemade and served fresh with a sprinkling of crumbled ginger snap cookies and a dollop of whipped topping. The Pineapple Right Side Up Cake is a new addition to the menu and is already in high demand, plus it's Gluten-Free! And of course, you can never go wrong with Pie à la Mode. After a particularly satisfying dinner I was in heaven with a huge slice of apple/raspberry/raspberry/blackberry/rhubarb pie!

