

{ 365 dining: Dubuque Mining Co. }



Dubuque Mining Co.



by Rich Belmont

For lifelong Dubuquers the Dubuque Mining Co. is to burgers as Happy Joe's is to pizza. In April, 1974 Steve Ankeny opened the Mining Company as a night club inside the Kennedy Mall. It was a rocking place with a bandstand and dance floor complete with disco mirror ball. Then in 1977 he began serving food and the rest as we say is history. It didn't take long for the local citizenry to discover this was a fabulous place to enjoy good burgers, salads, sandwiches and even Mexican specialties.



Cindy Oliver (above) started her restaurant career as a car-hop right out of 8th grade. Then for several years she was a waitress and barmaid at the Hotel Julien Dubuque. She began working at the Dubuque Mining Co. in 1979. Within a short time she was managing it and a few years later she purchased the restaurant outright from Mr. Ankeny.

Cindy has been at the Dubuque Mining Co. for over 33 years now. She has developed hundreds of regular customers who keep coming back week after week to enjoy the atmosphere and consistently satisfying meals. Cindy made a promise to those regulars that she would ensure the restaurant would continue its traditions for future generations. To that end a few years ago she offered one of her trusted and knowledgeable employees, Guy Parkin (next to Cindy above), the opportunity to become a partner.

Guy was a loyal employee who came to work at the Mining Co. in 1987 when he was a young man. He left a couple of times to pursue other interests but always came back because he really loves the restaurant business. Cindy promoted him to General Manager in 2001 and made him her partner seven years after that.



Together, Cindy and Guy continue to serve some of Dubuque's best loved burgers. There are over sixteen different 1/3 pounders on the menu! The Combination (below) is the one that made the Mining Co. famous.

It comes with your choice of cheese plus sliced mushrooms and Canadian bacon. All the burgers are big sellers but some of the most popular are the Polynesian Burger with chopped pineapple, Canadian bacon and sweet and sour sauce; the L.T.O. topped with lettuce, tomato and onion; and the Western Bacon Cheddar Pepper Burger piled high with jalapeño peppers, cheddar cheese, BBQ sauce, fried onion rings and Canadian bacon. A rather unusual one is the Kinda Reuben because it comes with Swiss cheese, Canadian bacon, sauerkraut and Thousand Island dressing. Then there is my favorite, the olive burger (right) which is called the International here. This one is stuffed with chopped green olives and Swiss



cheese. The locals hold these burgers in high esteem. They have received Best Fest's Best Burger award 25 times. In fact, in keeping with tradition Cindy and Guy continue to keep track of the running total of burgers sold since the restaurant's opening day. The current number as of this writing was 2,173,963 burgers!



Of course, there is a full menu of delectable sandwiches, dinner entrées and Mexican specialties. For starters the Nitro Wings (pictured at right) have a very tasty breading and hot pepper sauce and are crispy fried just the way I like them. It's hard to decide what appetizers to order. The Breaded Cheddar Crisps are real cheese curds, the onion rings are sweet, the nachos are covered with a top quality cheddar cheese sauce and the Spinach and Artichoke Dip was recently added to the menu because of customer requests.



On a recent visit my dining partners couldn't choose from such an assortment so our very friendly and helpful waitress, Lisa Greenwood, suggested the Mother Lode (pictured bottom right of facing page). This was a delicious basket of egg rolls, chicken strips, cheddar crisps and onion rings. Then, the talented and experienced cook, Doug Chapman (right), made us some of the specialties. We enjoyed the beef and bean deep fried Chimichanga, the grilled Chicken Polynesian sandwich with chopped pineapple and sweet and sour sauce, the Beer Battered Cod and the fried Pork Tenderloin sandwich, all of which are pictured around this page. This last one is listed on the menu as "ginormous" and it is! There is no way this huge pork patty is going to fit on a bun and the tomato and onion slices compliment the flavor of the tenderloin just right.



Dubuque Mining Co.

555 JFK Road, Kennedy Mall, Dubuque, IA 52002
563-557-1729 • www.DubuqueMiningCompany.com

HOURS: Mon – Sat, 11 am – 12 midnight, Sun, 11 am – 10 pm

Cocktail Hour, 9 pm – 11 pm nightly

DINING STYLE: Casual, **NOISE LEVEL:** Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Mother Lode appetizer basket; Nitro Wings; Combination, International, Cheddar Pepper Burgers; the Pork Tenderloin; Chicken Polynesian sandwich; Beer Battered Cod.

LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar, Specialty Drinks including the Cave In, Blue Lantern, Long Island Iced Tea and Muley Mary

PRICE RANGE: Lunch: \$7.50 - \$8.50, Dinner: \$7.50 - \$12.00

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Debit, All Major Credit Cards, Checks over #1000

ACCESSIBILITY: Door/Restrooms **KIDS POLICY:** Menu, High Chairs, Boosters

RESERVATIONS: Accepted except Fri & Sat after 6 pm

CATERING: No **TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** No **PARKING:** Lot

All of the sandwiches are served with shoe-string cut French Fries and a Dull Pickle. In case you are wondering a dull pickle is the same as a dill pickle only not as shiny!



The dinner menu is rounded out nicely with chicken strips, shrimp, house seasoned sirloin steaks cooked on a flat top grill and a grilled tuna steak sandwich. On a busy day the restaurant puts out over 500 meals: a phenomenal number considering how tiny the kitchen is!



The Dubuque Mining Co. is a true Eatery & Drinkery. There is a nightly cocktail hour that is actually two hours from 9 to 11 pm. There are at least a dozen specialty drinks and they are served in one quart fruit jars. Some of the most popular are the Blue Lantern containing rum, gin, vodka, Blue Curacao, sweet, sour and two mixers; the Cave In (pictured here) with gin, vodka, rum, orange juice and six mixers; the Muley Mary consisting of freshly made Bloody Mary mix derived from a secret recipe and served with a kick of beer and one of those dull pickle spears; and the Mining Co's own version of a Long Island Iced Tea. This one has the traditional four liquors of vodka, tequila, rum and gin plus a few other secret ingredients. This drink carried the distinction of being voted best Long Island Iced Tea in Dubuque for many years.



I often wondered why this establishment is always so busy on weekdays and now that I have checked it out I know why: It's because of the Daily Specials! Margaritas are \$3.00 all day on Monday. You get a free 23 oz. draft beer or soft drink with the purchase of any sandwich or dinner on Tuesday. All bottle or 12 oz. tap beers are only \$2.00 on Wednesday. On Thursday you can order any of the Specialty Quart Jar drinks for just \$5.00 and come in on Friday for the after work party when appetizers are \$4.00 and Happy Hour priced cocktails are served from 4 to 5:30 pm. Pitchers of beer are only \$5.00 during all Hawkeye games.

Daily Specials notwithstanding, any time is a good time to visit the Dubuque Mining Co. You can bring lots of family and friends to this restaurant because it is a good place for groups. The staff is only too happy to rearrange tables to accommodate any size party. And party is the word of the day!



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