



## Pepper Sprout

378 Main Street, Dubuque, IA 52001

563-556-2167; PepperSprout.Com

HOURS: Lunch: Tues – Fri 11:30 am – 2 pm, Apr 1st to Nov 1st

Dinner: Tues–Thur, 5–9 pm, Fri–Sat 5-10 pm, Closed Sun & Mon

ATMOSPHERE: Dress Casual NOISE LEVEL: Quiet

RECOMMENDATIONS: Roasted Garlic Onion Cheesecake; Baked Brie; Crab Dip; Smoked Chicken Squash Ravioli; Mac & Cheese Surprise; Vegetarian Fettuccini; Pork Osso Bucco; Pan Seared Duck Breast; Smothered Shrimp; Seafood Stew

LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar; Select Wines; Seasonal Specialty

Martinis, now featuring Pumpkin Pie and Grasshopper

PRICES: Appetizers: \$8 to \$11, Entrees: \$17 to \$35

RESERVATIONS: Recommended; 2 to 80

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Check, Debit, All Major Credit

ACCESSIBILITY: Dining Room and Restroom

KIDS POLICY: Kid Friendly; No Menu; High Chair Available

TAKE OUT: Yes DELIVERY: No

PARKING: On Street and Dubuque Parking Ramp



## PEPPER SPROUT

by Rich Belmont

Since January 2002, Pepper Sprout has been serving dinners. Proprietor and Head Chef, Kim Wolff, modestly call, "Midwest Cuisine." She says many people believe fine dining only exists on the East or West Coasts. So she is on a mission to change that perception. "We have locally raised meats and home grown fruits and vegetables all around us," she says. Kim insists on buying produce from the Dubuque Farmer's market. Local farmers supply her with meats and seafood comes from a purveyor in nearby Madison.

Kim always knew she had a talent for cooking. She grew up in a family that enjoyed preparing home cooked sit down dinners. Her grandparents were always in the kitchen making sauces or canning tomatoes or corn. Kim discovered she really liked cooking and, before long, she was throwing dinner parties for friends and family. She began her cooking career at the Silver Dollar Cantina in Dubuque and went on to develop her cooking skills at Old Village Hall in Lanesboro, MN. This fine dining restaurant is a three hour drive from Dubuque and is located in a small town. However, it is known far and wide as a fine dining destination offering locally grown seasonal cuisine and specialty dinners.

After 4 years, Kim returned to Dubuque thoroughly prepared to present the local

citizenry with awesome tasting food. For many people Pepper Sprout is the place to go for Midwest Gourmet Cuisine. It is also known for spectacular vegetarian dishes and scrumptious meals prepared with a heavy Cajun influence. The latter is the result of the annual trips Kim takes to New Orleans to study Creole cooking.

Kim is appreciative of her skilled and talented staff. Kelli Wessels and Luke Willis are in the kitchen and the front of the house is managed by Russ Cole.

The menu changes with the seasons. Fall offerings are now ready for your enjoyment. For starters, try the Baked Brie. This creamy cheese is served in a puff pastry with fresh fruit and roasted garlic supplied by a local farm. Mine came with a wonderful fresh raspberry salsa. The Crab Dip is fresh crab claw meat served warm with a blend of Ricotta, Parmesan and Cream Cheeses and sour cream. The Roasted Garlic, Caramelized Onion Cheesecake is simply delicious!



This is an unusual appetizer because it is a savory cheesecake with a walnut crust accompanied by a cranberry and orange sauce. Then there are the fresh mussels. The sauces for these vary as the season progresses. There might be a curry or red onion or tomato basil sauce. Order yours spicy or mild to suit your taste.

The soups are all made from scratch using fresh ingredients. They vary depending on what looks good at Farmer's Market. I had a wonderful creamy summer squash soup.



Sometimes there might be potato or a crowd favorite: Homemade Tomato, Basil with Artichoke and Feta Cheese.

The new Fall menu offers 5 pasta dishes. Whole chickens are smoked to provide meat for the Smoked Chicken Squash Ravioli. This dish has candied Brussels sprouts, bacon, cranberries and a brandy fresh sage cream sauce. The Mac & Cheese Surprise is back by popular demand. Sautéed shrimp, bacon, peas and mushrooms are baked with a blend of Cheddar, Provo-

lone and Mozzarella cheeses. The Vegetarian Fettuccini is also very popular. The pasta is tossed with sautéed mushrooms, roasted garlic, spinach and an onion marmalade sauce.

All the pastas are cooked al dente (to the tooth) meaning they are never mushy. All of them can be ordered as vegetarian dishes.

You will have a difficult time trying to decide what entrees to order. The Fall menu has eleven to choose from. The Grilled Bison Tenderloin is pepper crusted

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and bathed in a shallot port wine reduction. I know my favorite will be the Pork Osso Bucco. This impressive pork shank is slowly braised for 6 hours and is served with sauerkraut and a homemade mustard sauce. Many regulars will be pleased to see there is a Seafood Stew. This one has sautéed mussels, shrimp and fresh cod in a white bean, fennel, and potato saffron sauce finished with Sambuca. For a great unexpected taste sensation, try the Smothered Shrimp tossed with Andouille Sausage. This is cooked with okra, onions and peppers in a medium hot Creole Sauce. The Blackened Red Snapper is cooked with the skin on one side and blackened on the other side. The Blackening Seasoning is made in house with butter and special spices. So once again you can have yours prepared mild or spicy. It arrives with crawfish meat out of the shell and sausage with a savory Creole Sauce. And of course there is the Pan Seared Duck Breast, one of Kim's scrumptious specialties. All of the duck is

utilized so this dish includes a breast and leg comfit, meaning they are cooked in their own fat. Then they are covered with a red onion, roasted beet and apple cider sauce.

There are always one or two specials not on the menu. This allows the cooking staff to showcase their talents with newly picked produce or hard to find ingredients that are available in limited quantities. Specials might include Jambalaya, fresh Swordfish, Leg of Lamb, or fresh Diver Scallops.

Don't forget to save room for dessert! They are all made fresh in house. Kelli is the pastry chef and she is always coming up with new seasonal sweets. There might be Apple or Red Raspberry Cheesecake, a Pear Crisp or Chocolate Cake. Of course there is usually some of Kim's famous bread pudding! The one in the house right now is Banana Black Walnut with a Chocolate Carmel Sauce. Mmmm...



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