



Town Clock Inn Restaurant & Bar

by Rich Belmont



There is no doubt the people of Dubuque know what they like. And when it comes to delicious pizza and tasty sandwiches they obviously love the ones they get at Town Clock Inn Restaurant & Bar (TCI). They have been finding their way to the lower level of the Nesler Centre at Town Clock Plaza in Dubuque for 44 years!

Rita and Chick Schueller opened this restaurant with 2 other partners in 1970 in the basement of what was then the Montgomery Ward building. Chick bought out his partners and then sold the business to Rita several years later. During that time all 6 of their children worked in the restaurant. Their daughter, Stephanie Nelson, purchased TCI in 1985 and operated it for 26 years while raising her 3 children on her own. Her son Scott grew up in the restaurant and then moved to another state for awhile. When he came back to Dubuque he did concrete construction during the summers and helped his mom in TCI's kitchen during the winters. Scott Nelson always knew he would be the owner



someday. He waited until the time was right and finally he and his wife Irene purchased the business from his mother in May, 2009. Scott and Irene are committed to making steady improvements to the premises little by little. They are dedicated to insuring their customers continue to receive the same food at reasonable prices that is expected after 4 plus decades. Their 3 sons, ages 13, 11 and 9

help out and it is their parents' fervent hope at least one of them will continue to uphold the family traditions far into the future.

The Town Clock Inn has several specialties. First and foremost are the pizzas. The dough is made in-house, in small batches daily so it is always fresh. There are eleven deep dish specialty pizzas such as BLT, BBQ Chicken, Spicy Chicken, All Meat, Taco, Bacon Cheeseburger and the Matador. This last one contains sausage, Canadian bacon, pepperoni, bacon and jalapeño. Of course, there are over 15 toppings to choose from should you decide to build your own.

The Noon Hour Specials include the all-you-can-eat soup, salad and pizza bar. There are only a few pizzas on the bar at one time. This is because they do not contain any preservatives and Scott insists his customers deserve better than warmed-over pizzas. During lunch the pizza trays empty quickly. Not to worry, though: these trays are replaced with full ones every few minutes. The pizzas are baked in ovens at approximately 615°F so they keep coming one right after another.

When you don't see your favorite pizza combination, just ask your server. The kitchen will make it up and have it out on the bar in the time it takes you to eat a cup of soup or sausage chili. Even better, you can call ahead in advance and your specialty will be brought out upon your arrival.



It's also a good idea to call ahead if you are with a party of eight or more coming all at once for the buffet. When the kitchen knows what time you are arriving they make sure to have enough pies on the bar to satisfy your group.

Town Clock Inn Restaurant & Bar
799 Main Street, Nesler Centre Lower Level, Dubuque, IA 52001 | 563-556-1022
www.TownClockInnDBQ.com
HOURS: Tue – Thu: 11 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Fri: 11 a.m. – 10 p.m., Sat: 4 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Lunch Buffet: 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (Tue-Fri)
Sunday – Monday: Closed
DINING STYLE: Come as You Are
NOISE LEVEL: Conversational
RECOMMENDATIONS: Assorted Appetizer Basket, Garlic Bread, Split Pea or Chicken Soup, Deep Dish Pizza, Cavelli, Italian Grinder, Philly Steak, Reuben, TCI Burger, Grilled Chicken Salad, Reuben, TCI Burger, Grilled Chicken Salad, Dessert Pizzas
LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar
PRICES: Lunch: \$5.25 - \$8.75; Dinner: \$6.75 - \$25.50
PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Debit, MasterCard, Visa, Discover, No Checks
ACCESSIBILITY: Elevator to Lower Level
RESERVATIONS: Recommended
KIDS POLICY: Menu, High Chair & Booster
CATERING: No **TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** No
PARKING: On Street

Did you know that Town Clock Inn originated the Take-N-Bake pizza in Dubuque? Scott's grandmother, Rita, started selling "We Make You Bake" pizza in 1981. At this time you can get a special deal: When you purchase 4 you get the 5th one free!

One of the other specialties is an original pasta dish called Cavelli. It is TCI's own version of Cavatini. It's prepared with shells instead of the usual rotini or rigatoni and contains that fantastic home-made sausage instead of ground beef and pepperoni.

Another specialty is the Italian Grinder sandwich made with that same wonderful sausage, tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese.

Other house favorites include the TCI Burger covered with mushrooms and mozzarella (3rd from left at the top); the Philly Steak Deluxe with grilled sandwich steak, Swiss cheese, mushrooms, onion, and green peppers; and the Taco Melt Deluxe which is essentially a taco with melted cheddar cheese, lettuce and tomato in between slices of fresh baked bread.

The Reuben is also a top notch specialty. This sandwich contains top round corned beef sliced in-house with sauerkraut on marble rye bread. The 1000 Island dressing is served on the side so the sandwich doesn't get soggy.

I recommend you always save room for TCI's Sweet Endings. These are 8" Dessert Pizzas in apple, cinnamon or cherry with streusel topping and icing. Each one serves 3 to 4 people and is the perfect finish to a fine lunch or dinner.

The most popular pizzas are the ones containing pork sausage. The sausage is excellent! It is made in-house according to an old family recipe. There is no other sausage in Dubuque like it and Scott says that's because he mixes in Schoen (pronounced Shayn) Seasoning provided by Dubuque native John Schoen. The seasoning is powerful so it is carefully blended into the sausage which is cooked twice.

There are pizza nightly specials too. On Tuesday and Friday any 16" family size specialty pizza is only \$21.00 and on Thursday and Saturday nights any specialty 12" large pizza is only \$15.00.



TCI is a great place to watch your favorite game. There are several flat screen TV's strategically located throughout the bar area and dining rooms. Recently my tasting team watched some of the Olympics while munching on a large assorted basket of jalapeño poppers, chicken tenders, cheese cubes, onion rings, mozzarella sticks, mini tacos, mushrooms and seasoned waffle fries.

When you are visiting take some time to check out the pictures on the walls in each of the rooms. They are very interesting scenes of Dubuque from the 1880s to the 1940s.

Did you notice I said "each of the rooms" as in plural? TCI has several party spaces and can accommodate parties of up to sixty people.

Town Clock Inn will be closed for remodeling March 9 thru 12. During those 4 days the bathrooms will be updated with new doors, floors, sinks, grab bars and baby changing stations. There will be some repainting and the replacing of some of the ceiling tiles and light fixtures.

