



CHEESEBURGERS WITH ONION AND A SCOOP

Paul's Tavern

By Rich Belmont and Bryce Parks

Dubuque365 started in an attic on Bluff Street just a stone's throw from Paul's Tavern, or Paul's Big Game Tap as some still call it. So for us, goin' to Paul's will always be synonymous with "takin' out the trash," because if we did that household chore, when we got to the curb, we were just a Hartig's parking lot away from Paul's front door and, well... we've got time for a scoop and a burger, right? It's the basics of bar food. And when it comes to bar food, you can't get more basic than the legendary Paul's Tavern on Locust St. between 1st and 2nd St. in Dubuque. And that's just about perfect.

This bar has been operating continuously for 73 years now. The Tavern opened in 1948 and was purchased by Paul Schollmeyer on Aug. 3, 1949. Paul developed a reputation for serving good beer and burgers. He was also known for his fishing and hunting expeditions. During the 1950s and 1960s, he went on many big game excursions and brought back impressive trophies. Several of these are still exhibited in glass cases mounted on the walls and even the ceiling of the tavern. For example, there are displays of a bighorn sheep from Montana, a white-tailed deer from Saskatchewan, a grizzly bear and wolverine from British Columbia, and a polar bear shot north of the Arctic Circle. All of these animals were taken years before there were any government restrictions on big game hunting. Paul continued to visit the tavern

when he was not in his winter home in Brownsville, TX for years. He passed here in Dubuque at age 90 in 2018.

Tom Koch took over the tavern in 1993. He was a manager at McDonald's for the previous 14 years and decided to try running his own place. He was already tending bar a couple of nights a week and knew many of the regular customers. Some of them asked him to keep the bar the way it was and not change a thing. Obviously, Tom took that advice. The animals are still on display, there are still only five tables and 16 bar stools, and although they are closed on Mondays, they are open every other day except Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. He did remodel the entrance and facade of the bar, losing the glass block that once adorned the front wall around the windows, and added an accessible ramp so now everyone can enjoy Paul's burgers through the front door. One more thing that has changed is the price of the burgers. In 1943 they cost 25 cents, and today they're up to \$3.75. How boujee!

Another thing that hasn't changed is the way the hamburgers are cooked. When this bar first opened, a Broilator manufactured by the now-defunct Norge Company was installed. This gas-fired countertop broiler contains a very well-seasoned cast iron griddle. The cook places burgers on this plate and pulls a lever that positions the plate between the top and bottom flames. The meat is cooked at a high temperature and does not have to be flipped. The Broilator has been cooking over 100 hamburgers a day for over 70 years! The griddle only holds eight burgers, so when the bar is busy you have to wait your turn. Nobody complains, though, because the wait is well worth it.

Walking into Paul's Tavern is like stepping back in time. It's also an exercise in getting back to simple,

Third Corner

**NEW NAME
NEW VIBE
SAME AMAZING
FOOD+DRINKS!**

FOOD & SPIRITS

Formerly
Which?Sandwich

Corner of
1st & Main!

Weekly Specials!

Tues: Footlong Chidog
Weds: \$5 Burger
Thurs: Beef Brisket
Fri: Italian Beef
Sat: Pulled Pork

THURSDAY
TRIVIA, 6 PM

Tues 11-3
Wed 11-5
Thurs-Sat 11-Close

210 W.1st Street • 563.451-7708 • facebook.com/ThirdCornerBar

For all library events that require pre-registration, please visit:
www.dubcolib.lib.ia.us/events-programs/register-for-any-program/

READING
COLORS Your WORLD.

This summer Reading Colors Your World at your library! Registration for DCLD summer sessions begins May 1. You will be able to register for the first 4 weeks of programs, the second 4 weeks, or the whole summer. Be sure to read the description on each online registration, as programs that require supplies will often have earlier deadlines than those that do not. Virtual programs with supplies may have a limit on how many can register and receive the supply kit All of our outdoor, in-person activities will have limited capacity, in order to allow us to maintain safe social distancing.

Scan this QR code with your mobile device to register for library programs or visit www.dubcolib.org

Important Dates:

June 14 – August 7: Summer Reading Challenge

June 1 at 6pm, **June 3** at 1pm: How to use ReadSquared Zoom classes

May 1 – 30: Registration for the first 4 weeks of summer programs and classes

June 10 – 12: Pick-up supplies for events happening June 14 – July 10

June 14: Register for the Summer Reading Challenge and start logging minutes!

June 30: Deadline to register for second 4 weeks of summer events

July 8 – 10: Pick-up prizes earned during the first 4 weeks

July 8 – 10: Pick-up supplies for events happening July 12 – August 7

August 12 – 14: Final prize pick-up

Five Convenient County Locations...

- Asbury 5290 Grand Meadow Dr., 563-582-0008
- Farley/Drexler Middle School. 405 3rd Ave. N.E., 563-744-3371 ext. 5160

- Epworth - 110 Bierman Road S.E., 563-876-3388
- Holy Cross - 895 Main Street, 563-870-2082
- NICC/Peosta - 8342 NICC Dr., 563-556-5110 ext. 224

DUBUQUE COUNTY
LIBRARY DISTRICT



uncomplicated eating. The menu is the same for lunch and dinner, and it features only five items and really those are variations on three items. They are a beef burger, cheeseburger, ham sandwich, hot ham and cheese, and tuna salad, all priced between \$3.50 and \$3.75. You can have any cheese you want on your cheeseburger as long as what you want is American cheese.

And you have your choice of burger toppings, too. Would you like bacon, lettuce, and maybe some avocado? Tough nuggets. You can ask for ketchup, mustard, pickle, and onion, but they will grill those onions for you. That's all you need on these burgers anyway. In fact, there is a sign next to the Broilator that reads "This is not Burger King. You don't get it your way. You take it my way or you don't get the darned thing." Fair enough! The burgers are excellent! The quarter pounders are made fresh every day from a 90/10 blend of ground beef. The only seasonings used are salt and pepper, and then the Broilator works its magic.

The result is a truly extraordinary burger. So much so, it has earned Paul's Tavern a listing in *Hamburger America, A State By State Guide to 150 Great Burger Joints* by George Motz. Some people consider this book to be the definitive guide to the great hamburger bars across the United States.

There are no fries in this place. Heck, there aren't any prepared sides at all. They once had soups in the winter and mayo-based salads in the summer, but the city came in and said they had to put in a whole fancy expensive kitchen in order to make chicken noodle soup and potato salad. So quite naturally, Paul's said nuts to that nonsense and simply stopped serving those items. So now the offerings are more straightforward than ever. But you can have a side of chips, pretzels, peanuts, or fresh-popped popcorn. They have about 20 varieties of chips available

and let's be honest, that's practically a salad. Would you like dessert? Absolutely! You can have a candy bar. Or maybe a White Claw. That's dessert, right?

So stop by Paul's Tavern and say hello to Tom; his brother, Dave; and daughter, Amber Koch. They will be happy to serve you a bottle (or a scoop, if you speak the lingo) of several brews including Busch Light, Bud Light, Michelob Ultra, Blue Moon, and surprisingly they have Mango Cart beer on tap. And they'll fix you up with a great sandwich. Paul's Tavern is where you still ■



Paul's Tavern
 176 LOCUST ST, DUBUQUE, IA
 563-556-9944
Hours: 9 AM-2 AM Daily
Ordering Options: Dine in, carryout

SUBMIT YOUR DINING SUGGESTIONS!
 DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE RESTAURANT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE US VISIT? SEND US YOUR REQUESTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS!
 EMAIL: DINING@DUBUQUE365.COM

CARLOS O'KELLY'S
 INSPIRED MEX

New Traveling Quesadilla Griddle!

We Come To You!

Make your summer events DELICIOUS with Carlos O' Kelly's mobile Quesadilla grill. That's right, the experts of Inspired Mex will bring everything needed, including flat top grills and all the fixings you love. Enjoy grilled steak, chicken, shrimp or seasoned ground beef and all the veggies, salsa, queso and sour cream you need to whip up fresh made cheesy quesadillas for you and all of your guests to devour.

This Summer, Let Carlos O'Kelly's "Bring the Fiesta" to your Graduation Party or Special Event for as low as...
\$6.99 Per Person!

Big party? Combine the Carlos O'Kelly's Quesadilla Griddle and Taco Bar with Margaritas. It's the trifecta of Summer flavors, taking your graduation parties, family reunions, company event and private parties to the next level. Call today to book your events and leave the work to us so you can focus on the fun!

YES • YOU • CAN...
 have our famous MARGARITAS at your event!

The Carlos crew can also bring along the famous Carlos O'Kelly's Margarita machine with them to round out the perfect party with a refreshing cool kicker.

CALL 563.583.0088