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Millie's Diner

By Bryce Parks

One of our *365ink* crew, Steven Thompson, was talking about a meal he had at a diner in Dickeyville, WI recently and told us we have to go check the place out. Not only did he like the food, but there was also so much food, he had another meal out of what he took home with him. So when you combine the notion of good diner food with the idea of being ridiculously over served, well, that sounds like just our kind of place.

So, on an otherwise boring Monday afternoon, about an hour and a half after most sane human beings enjoy lunch, we gathered the tasting crew and headed east, across the bridge to Wisconsin, to see what was cookin' in Dickeyville these days.

First of all, you can't miss the place. I mean, the darn building is bright pink. A wise marketing move when they opened

last year. So, don't worry about driving past. I mean, if it was anyplace but Dickeyville, I'd say, "Just look for the place that stands out the most," but you know... grotto. So Millie's will have to settle for being the second most memorable building in town. Before Millie's, it was called Katina's Kitchen.

When you walk in, you get exactly what you expect. This is a small-town diner, complete with the small bar seating off the entry and plenty of farm- and country-flavored decor on the walls: quaint and comfy. And there are always a few specials on the board when you enter. When we visited, they offered a mushroom Swiss omelet, prime rib melt, bacon gouda bites, blue gill basket, chorizo and egg tacos, and meatloaf on jalapeno cornbread.

There are two menus, one for breakfast for one for lunch (starting at 11 a.m.), and we were presented with both at the same time, so the sky's the limit on what we could order. There is very little about the menu that is a surprise or a curveball as far as diner expectations. But that's not the idea. This is a small-town diner, and they do what they do and don't try to be things they are not. If anything was

unique, it may have been the Monte Cristo sandwich and their signature banana bread french toast. In fact, after we ordered, we realized we forgot to ask for some, and wouldn't you know it... they brought us some to try anyway. It was legit.

The breakfast menu has all the things you hope to see: a bunch of omelets, an array of hash options, breakfast sandwiches, biscuits and gravy, combo meals, and, of course, the Morning Mess. You know, those glorious piles of food love where all the good stuff is layered up in one mountain of love. The breakfast platters can get you into a nice 6- or 8-oz. strip steak, ham steak, or a nice, thick country-fried pork tenderloin smothered in homemade sausage gravy. Our pork t was no smashed-out, thin version. This was a fully thick slice of pork that disappeared under a pile of gravy.

Because we took a good look at their Facebook page before we came, we were already privy to the insane, not-so-secret truth about their pancakes. They are simply enormous. Probably 14 to 16 inches in diameter. They hang off all sides of the plate at one time. And this baby is a good inch thick. It is indeed a cake. So, one pancake will quite literally and effectively cover all of the pancake desires of a family of four.

We already noted the famous banana bread french toast baked fresh in-house. They also have great traditional french toast using bread baked in East Dubuque, IL, and then Millie's slices it themselves really thick. Get it plain or try blueberry, strawberry, or caramel apple. They even have a Cap'N Crunch version.

While you may often choose the daily special, there is defiantly a lunch menu filled with a variety of sandwich favorites including a Reuben, BBQ pulled pork, pork tenderloin, Monte Cristo, swiss ham and chicken, and more. All of their thick burgers are house-made patties made up your way. No skimpy burgers here, and that's always a nice safe place to land when you can make up your mind. Throw in a couple of salad options, and you've covered most of it. They're not reinventing the wheel here, they're just serving up great diner food in quantities that might take a sidekick to help polish it off.

We sincerely liked everything we ordered, and we all tried each other's food to make sure we were well-versed in the Millie's handbook. That delicious prime rib melt we had was clearly from leftover prime rib featured over the weekend on the only two nights they stay open late. You know, 7 p.m.-late! And the pictures of the prime rib, when it's fresh on the special menu, are a sight to see. I think if you're worried about the line to get a table at Village Bar in Kieler, WI (and you

eat before 7 p.m.), you might just roll a couple more miles down the road to Millie's and see if you're not just as happy.

The sides were also very good, from the seasoned fries to the sweet country potatoes which were a nice addition. And as you'll be hard-pressed to find anything on the menu over \$15, the value is there for sure. Good food. Lots of it, and a bill you can pay with the cash in your pocket (because they don't take a credit card... but they do have an ATM. Checks are accepted, too.) You might want to think about sharing some of the items you get or else leftovers are likely in your future. But who doesn't love leftovers?

We'll be back to investigate some more of this small but mighty menu and, of course, to see what's on the specials board. We have a feeling that there are a lot of great things to find there on a regular basis that aren't on the menu every day. So every visit can be a little bit of a surprise. What won't be a surprise is your contentment with your choice to dine out that day! ■



Millie's Diner
 205 W MAIN ST, DICKEYVILLE, WI
 608-568-9965
 MILLIESDINERWI.COM
 FB: @MilliesDinerDickeyville
 Hours: Sun-Tue & Thu: 7 AM-3 PM;
 Fri-Sat: 7 AM-7 PM; Wed: Closed

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