



SUNFLOWER PESTO PANINI



FALAFEL BOWL



APPLE CRISP SALAD

Refresh

By Danny Fairchild

How to describe Refresh Food, Juice & Boba. Well first, let's get the pronunciation down. Is it "RE-fresh" or "re-FRESH?" I'm choosing to put the emphasis on "fresh" because so do the good people at Refresh. But beyond that, how would you describe a sandwich et. al. shop with a painting of Anthony Bourdain displayed religiously prominent, with Japanese sodas and candies available for sale, situated right next to a brewpub? You know what it's like? Think of a legendary college town sandwich shop. The one that alumni talk about to identify one another. Now imagine that it hasn't been around long enough to officially gain legend status. And it's not that close to a college campus. But you still got the care and passion and menu that MAKES a place like that legendary. Imagine you could be one of the people to say, "Oh hell yeah. I've been eating at that place since Fairchild wrote about it." Yes, in this scenario, I'm pretending that my name means something to you and your acquaintances. I want to be a legend, too.

So yeah. I think I just effectively described Refresh.

Let's get back to the painting of Bourdain. My apologies to the artist if it ISN'T a painting of Anthony Bourdain, but I like to think I know Bourdain when I see him. When you have a painting of the late chef, author, and travel documentarian, you're pretty much setting the tone: You're showing that you're proud of the food you make, and you're going to take the food you make seriously, but not so seriously that you fall victim to snobbery.

There. NOW I've effectively described Refresh. Ready to talk about the food? Me, too.

I'm sure this is a shortcoming on my part, but... for the most part, I've always been disappointed by panini sandwiches.

Yeah, I don't understand it, either. It's toasty. It's melty. It marries flavors beautifully. It isn't a mess to eat. So, I don't know. I guess maybe I expect more from something that's toasty, melty, marries flavors beautifully, and isn't a mess to eat. You know what also often disappoints me? Pesto. With that much damn basil, I expect to taste the basil. Is that too much to ask? Yeah, there's all sorts of other good stuff in pesto but like... basil makes it vibrant. I want to taste that color of green, dammit!

So, when I asked for a recommendation and was hit with a sunflower pesto panini... well... I agreed, but... I had a feeling I was going to be mostly dining on the other things I ordered to try. But when what can only be described as a coital grunt escaped my throat when I first took a bite of the toasty, melty chicken, cherry tomatoes, provolone, and balsamic coming along on a magic carpet ride of pesto... well... nobody was more surprised than me. The basil! Oh, the basil! It's there. It's there in force. And it's not ALL your taste, of course. Nobody wants that. But like I said... panini sandwiches are good at marrying flavors together. When they're in the panini press, they just can't escape each other. THIS is what I want from a panini. Thank you, Refresh.

Now, if you're a panini skeptic like I tend to be, know that any of their sandwiches can be ordered as a hoagie. So, not only can you get a sunflower pesto hoagie, you can bring the entire state of Pennsylvania to its knees by ordering a Philly cheesesteak panini. The world is yours.

I still had room to house most of the falafel bowl I ordered. Boy howdy, if there's one thing that could make me go vegan, it's falafel. Seasoned fried balls of chickpea? Doesn't sound like something that can satisfy someone like me who considers eating meat at least a small part of my personal and cultural identity. It honestly gets the job done, though. It's filling and tasty. I love it. That's why I ordered it, sans recommendation. So, what are we talking here?

We're talking falafel (duh), quinoa, hummus, tomato, cucumber, pickled onion, black olive, and several triangles of naan. You get to assemble everything with just the right proportions of everything. I love taking a meal into my own hands when I have a meal in my hands. So good! And again, it was so fresh tasting. Probably because it's fresh. That's how fresh tends to work. Those cukes certainly helped. So did the acidity of the pickled onions. And if you're looking for someone to eat your olives, I'm that person. Send them to me directly. Or email me, and I'll come pick them up.

Finally, I got myself the Apple Crisp Salad or, as I'm going to call it, "The salad for people who think they don't like salad." I know that sounds like it's a few greens with a huge helping of apple crisp on top, but come on. Be reasonable here. We're talking a nice, crisp spring mix of greens with crisp apples, crisp candied pecans, and crisp... okay the dried cranberries and feta are NOT crisp, but do you really want them to be? This salad still comes by the name "crisp" honestly. Just like Refresh comes by the name "fresh" honestly. And oh! Did you think I forgot to mention the dressing? I did forget, thanks for reminding me. This beauty is dressed with a maple vinaigrette. I've had lots and lots and lots of different vinaigrette. Lots. Why, oh why has it taken almost 45 YEARS for maple vinaigrette to enter my life? Such a perfect dressing for this salad. Inspired, really. Kind of makes me want to explore a bit more with vinaigrettes in my own kitchen.

I'm going to have to go back and explore the milk tea and juices and boba. I just know it's awesome to have a new place to get boba in downtown Dubuque. If you're looking to keep it simple, no problem. Just grab a can of Coke products from the fridge. Want to know what Skittles taste like in Japan? With Refresh, now's your chance without paying shipping.

As usual, when I can, I'd like to mention the restroom situation. It's important to people, I know. There's only one restroom

to keep clean at Refresh, and it absolutely is clean. Just pass to the right hand side of Anthony Bourdain, and potty in comfort. The building is old. You can tell by the Old Downtown Dubuque ceilings. But the potty is REFRESHed. See what I did there?

I really think Refresh has something special to offer Dubuque. It's not just another sandwich shop. But it IS still, among other things, a sandwich shop. And that's pretty special all by itself. ■



Refresh

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Hours: Tue-Sat: 9 AM-3 PM;
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DANNY FAIRCHILD

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