



BUTCHER'S STEAK



TAP HOUSE CHICKEN



BBQ GRILLED SALMON

Island Social Kitchen + Bar

At Q Casino + Resort

By Bryce Parks

In a recent cover story of *365ink*, we told you all about the newly remodeled Q Casino + Resort on Schmitt Island in Dubuque. As part of that multi-phase project, one of the portions that opened along with the casino was the first component of the new Island Social at the resort complex. By the end of 2024, the entire family-friendly Island Social entertainment destination part of Q Casino + Resort will be open featuring games, activities, dining, and group-gathering amenities that welcome all ages. For those familiar with Q Casino, this new, family-oriented

part of the facility will fill the entire left or upper portion of the former gaming space. While much of that is currently under construction, one critical component that opened along with the lower casino remodel is the Island Social Kitchen + Bar. And yes, everyone is welcome, kids and all.

Usually when we write about a new restaurant, we focus on all of the new food options, and yes, Island Social does have new food options, but it also carries over a lot of favorites from the former Q Sports Bar that existed nearby. What changed most about this dining experience from a couple of months ago is the space itself. This is not the same venue remodeled. This eatery is located on the opposite side of the upper portion of the venue. So, it's all new, 100%. While a temporary wall still separates it from the ongoing remodel zone, it's fully up and running.

The new sports bar feel of Island Social Kitchen + Bar indeed includes scores of flatscreen TVs, carrying every game imaginable. And you can "bet" that Q Sportsbook is right there next to the eatery. While somewhat separated to keep the restaurant all ages, Q Sportsbook is super convenient to access from your barstool or table for placing bets while enjoying your eats, if that's part of the game plan during your visit.

The main area is centered around a huge, beautiful new bar with table seating

surrounding it. A comfy row of booths is soon to arrive to complete the vibe of the bar area. Right next to that is overflow seating for the bar when a big game is on or it's a busy night at the casino. It's also a great place to pull a couple of tables together for a larger group as we did. This space has even more TVs than the main bar area. So yeah, if your game is on anywhere, you'll find it here.

They call the elevated cuisine "American Inspired." Now when we talk about elevating the menu, this starts with the bar offerings itself. Island Social Kitchen + Bar features a new drink menu with specialty martinis, Bubbl'r cocktails, and seltzers in addition to, of course, a big list of draft and craft beers including many local and regional brews as well as a selection of white, red, rosé, and sparkling wine options. And for the non-drinkers and kids, check out the jazzed-up Island Sodas. For example, the OG Island Soda starts with Pepsi or Diet Pepsi and adds a dash of coconut syrup, lime juice, and heavy cream. You gotta try one to understand. Others include the Dr. Q, Orange Crushed, Black Cherry Limeade, and Not Exactly a Root Beer Float. They also offer craft mocktails, flavored lemonades, and Bubbl'r to round out the unique options.

The food menu is pretty extensive. Appetizers feature plenty of old favorites, if presented in new combinations, like

loaded tater tots with BBQ pork, taco meat, or grilled chicken "loaded" toppings. Plus loaded nachos, wings, Philly fries, cheese curds, and the former "BBT" chicken strips are served nugget-sized now and are still just as great. New to the apps are the fancy deviled eggs and baked Mediterranean Dip. You might consider the giant Bavarian pretzels (traditional, pepperoni, or chicken bacon ranch) to be in this category as well.

The signature salads are all-new options on the menu with a black garlic chopped chicken Caesar salad; olive-roasted salmon and vegetable salad; an amped-up house salad; and an ISK+B salad featuring grilled shrimp, avocado, bacon, marinated tomato, smoked ranch dressing, shaved radish, and umami chickpeas.

Even at the previous iteration of the sports bar, the new signature mac and cheese options were a recent addition. They are rich and delish. I could not finish mine, and I'm no dainty fella. The OG Four Cheese is joined by chicken alfredo, BBQ pulled pork, buffalo chicken, and Mexican garlic shrimp options.

Sandwich options aplenty feature many traditional favorites like a build-your-own burger, Philly cheesesteak, chicken bacon ranch, chicken quesadilla wrap, and four cheese grilled cheese. But some newer flair comes in the form of a grilled chipotle chicken on fry bread with pico, cajun catfish



MEXICAN GARLIC SHRIMP MAC



CAJUN CATFISH BLT



PHILLY CHEESE STEAK SANDWICH



SUPREME PIZZA, WISCONSIN CHEESE CURDS, CAESAR SALAD, AND CHICKEN BITES



A VARIETY OF COCKTAILS



APPLE CRISP PERSONAL PAN PIZZA



OLD FASHIONED TRIFLE

BLT, pressed grilled chicken pesto, and pressed Q-bano (we think you can guess what that is!) Three fancy footlong dogs round out the sammys with a classic Chicago-style, chili dog, and an insane Back Waters dog that features a fried bacon-wrapped dog covered in fried cheese curds, BBQ aioli, onion straws, and house pickles. That one might come with a nap.

And not to worry, the pizzas came across the building with the rest of the sports bar. Build your own or try a loaded five meat; supreme; BBQ chicken; Philly cheesesteak; or caprese-style pizza with roasted garlic, fresh mozzarella, basil, marinated tomatoes, and balsamic reduction.

Finally, the dinner menu takes the lunch menu and, for now, adds five elevated entrees to choose from to enhance your experience. These main course features include a grilled pork ribeye with warm mustard potato salad, grilled asparagus, feta cheese, and Greek butter; BBQ grilled salmon with crispy shallots, umami-roasted cauliflower, and jasmine rice; butcher's steak with garlic herb butter, roasted garlic mashed, and grilled asparagus; tap house chicken (fried or grilled) with garlic mashed, cheddar, onion straws, and English pub gravy; and grilled shrimp with Latin hash, chimichurri, and salsa roja. These options also helped my gluten-free wife find good options for dinner.

Side options include fries or tots, cottage cheese, side house, or side Caesar, and in the evenings, grilled asparagus or roasted garlic mashed. They also always have chili available as well as a featured soup of the day.

The dessert menu is hidden at the back of the drink menu, so don't go thinking there isn't one. Check out the loaded chocolate chip cookie with Nutella buttercream and caramel pearls; the mason jar banana cream pie; an apple crisp personal pan pizza; and an old-fashioned trifle with chocolate cake, Bulleit Bourbon chocolate mousse, Luxardo cherries, whipped cream, and cocoa nibs. You know, if you have room. You might just want to start with dessert now that I think about it.

Well, there you have it. A little bit of something for everyone which is handy now that everyone can dine. Island Social is open daily, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and until midnight on Friday and Saturday. Tell 'em *365ink* sent ya and drop a bet on Caitlin Clark while you're there! ■



Island Social Kitchen + Bar
Q CASINO + RESORT
 1855 GREYHOUND PARK RD, DUBUQUE, IA
 563-582-3647
 QCASINOANDRESORT.COM
Hours: Sun–Thu: 11 AM–10 PM;
 Fri–Sat: 11 AM–Midnight

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Events at Back Waters Stage

Q Casino + Resort's Back Waters Stage presented by MidwestOne Bank returns with a slate of star-studded entertainment for all ages. Located at 1855 Greyhound Park Rd. on Schmitt Island in Dubuque, all of the shows are rain or shine. Tickets can be purchased at BackWatersStage.com.



I Prevail
 WITH SPECIAL GUESTS HOLLYWOOD UNDEAD AND FIT FOR A KING
FRIDAY, JULY 12 @ 6:30 PM
BACK WATERS STAGE
 Post-hardcore punks I Prevail grabbed fans' attention with their incendiary cover of Taylor Swift's "Blank Space" in 2014. The

band sets itself apart from the pack with a unique mix of raw punk energy, catchy hooks, and electronic textures, and in concert, it all gets turned up to 11 with mosh pit-inspiring standouts like "Crossroads," "Love, Lust, and Liars," and "The Enemy."

Following the chart-topping 2013 release of *Notes from the Underground*, the masked members of raucous rap rock band Hollywood Undead bring an adrenaline-filled live shows. And like the best metalcore bands, opener Fit for a King offer an uncompromising, high-energy live show full of chugging riffs, clean and unclean vocals, and thudding drums.

Tickets are \$59.99 for GA, \$79.99 for Turpin Tailgate Zone, \$134.99 for Undead Army VIP Merch Package, and \$234.99 for HU4L VIP Meet and Greet. ■



Beartooth
 WITH SPECIAL GUESTS CURRENTS, BOUNDARIES, AND NEVERTEL
THURSDAY, JULY 18 @ 6:30 PM
BACK WATERS STAGE
 The fearlessly determined and creative Ohio-based powerhouse Beartooth perfected a sound sought by a generation of bands, equal parts solitary musical confession and celebratory exorcism. It's an outright refusal to suffer in silence, weaponizing radio-ready bombast to

deliver raw emotion mixed with noise-rock chaos. They combine hard rock and hardcore in a way that's smart, lean, melodic, and irresistible, without apology.

After more than 900 million streams from songs like "The Past is Dead," "Fed Up," and "In Between," in addition to the band's fourth album, *Below*, topping charts and finding its way into Best Rock/Metal Albums of the Year in 2021, *Rolling Stone* introduced Beartooth as one of 10 New Artists You Need To Know.

Their latest single "Riptide" is a furiously courageous song of self-empowerment serving as a victory lap to memorialize a struggle with mental health and self-acceptance, which has defined so much of Beartooth since its inception. Beartooth offers no cure, but the recovery comes in the process; the journey is the destination. So enjoy the ride.

Tickets are \$44.99 for GA and \$54.99 for Turpin Tailgate Zone. ■