



CHICKEN SALAD SLIDERS AT STONE CLIFF WINERY



BREAKFAST OMELETTE AT BIRDIE'S BISTRO



SQUARE PIZZA AT DRIFTLESS PIZZA CO.



CATFISH NUGGETS AT CATFISH CHARLIE'S



CRISPY BRUSSELS SPROUTS AT WOODLAND'S RESTAURANT

More of Our Favorite Things

By Bryce Parks and Danny Fairchild

It's been quite a while since we've taken a moment to focus not on an entire restaurant, but rather to put a spotlight on a few of our favorite dishes around the area. Sure, there's great food all over the Dubuque area, and if you say just about any eatery's name, Danny or I can probably tell you one or two of our go-to faves from that joint. But among those go-to faves, these are some of the things we always know we're going to get when we go out. Yes, we should probably try new things at these places, but if you know what's going to make you happy, why go get all creative?

Bryce's Picks

Chicken Salad Sliders Stone Cliff Winery

One of our favorite fast and easy lunch go-tos, especially during nice weather months, is the chicken salad sliders at Stone Cliff Winery in the Port of Dubuque. It's just good ol' simple smooth and savory chicken salad served up on four freshly toasted pretzel buns. And we always split an order and call it a lunch. It's enough, but it's still light and summery and goes well with an iced tea or, we're sure, a cool white wine from Stone Cliff. The chicken salad itself just seems to have the perfect blend of sweet and a bit of spice. It's not dry, and there's a generous portion on every bun. And if you sit outside under the pergola, you can even take your dog!

Breakfast Omelettes Birdie's Bistro

Since its recent opening, Birdie's has become a regular weekend morning treat for us, whether we're hitting the Dubuque Farmers' Market or just out running errands on a Sunday. Or heck, when we have family in town and don't want to

cook breakfast. They have a lot of lunch entrees too, but we tend to gravitate to the omelettes, always served with the signature crispy country style potatoes. And even though I'm a devout bacon guy, I really like their round sausage patties too. My wife can get lots of veggies in her omelette with feta cheese and jalapeños while I can keep it old school with cheese and mushrooms. Pancakes are crazy fluffy, and friends love the chicken and biscuits and corned beef hash. But there are plenty of opportunities for variety to hit your morning sweet spot. And they have gluten-free toast which makes my wife very happy too. And you can get a copy of *365ink* if they haven't run out!

Square Pizza Driftless Pizza Co.

It's super new, but what can I say, I'm a fan. The Detroit-inspired pizza at the new Driftless Pizza Co. in the Millwork District ranks high on my personal pizza scale. Little Caesars pan pizza would be the bastardized version of Detroit style if you're wondering what I'm talking about, and yes, I do like that too. This is that idea taken to a higher level. And truer to form, the sauce is on the top with this

pizza and not too much, but they serve it with a bowl of sauce for dipping if you want a little more. We've had a few varieties now, and we've liked them all. A thick, airy crust with a crispy bottom and a crown of fried Wisconsin brick cheese forms the base. Great quality toppings (I like a good Italian sausage) and a couple pieces will likely do the trick. Try the Hot Honey Sausage or Figgy the White! I've found the cold pizza leftovers from the fridge to also be a fine snack. And it's in a great space in a cool part of downtown.

Catfish Nuggets Catfish Charlie's

For me, a relaxing summer lunch is a visit to Catfish Charlie's patio and a serving of their fried catfish nuggets. They can be a meal unto themselves, or, I like the entree pairing with chicken fingers. I don't know what it is about them, but I just love the flavor, and crisp-but-flaky, locally caught catfish that isn't "fishy" as it were. And a nice big pile of them to share (or not share, as the case may be) helps too. It doesn't hurt that you are also sitting on a sunny patio looking out on the water of the Mississippi either. Add an ice-cold Arnold Palmer, and I'm all set!



PHOTO: SONIC DRIVE-IN

SLUSH WITH NERDS AT SONIC DRIVE-IN



PHOTO: CULVER'S

LEMON ICE COOLER AT CULVER'S



PHOTO: JUMBLE COFFEE CO.

JUMBLE COFFEE CO.



PHOTO: BEECHER'S

BEECHER'S ICE CREAM & YOGURTS

Crispy Brussels Sprouts Woodland's Restaurant at Eagle Ridge Resort

Yeah, yeah, it's kinda high falutin' fare and a bit of a drive, but man, the drive is well worth the visit to Woodland's Restaurant at Eagle Ridge Resort in Galena, IL. And as much magic is on the menu, we kind of always have to start with an order of the crispy brussels sprouts. They're not complex, but man, they are like little bits of veggie candy. Roasted (I assume) to a crispy outer layer, they are tossed in a sweet malpey glaze with cotija cheese and scallions. Cotija is like a mild Mexican feta or a parmesan depending on if it's young or aged. But the real magic here is the Nueske's bacon nuggets in there. If you know Nueske's bacon from just north of Green Bay, WI, then you already understand what I'm talking about. If not, you have to taste it to understand the difference. It's a true applewood-smoked bacon, not smoke flavor injected. You can tell the difference immediately, and it's other-worldly. Follow up with basically anything else on the menu, and you're good to go!

Danny's Picks

Bryce just sated your hunger, so now your ol' pal Danny is gonna slake your thirst. We are in the doggiest days of summer, and since sweating doesn't help much in this kind of humidity, we're all forced to drink. I'm going to keep it all-ages, though, and showcase some of my favorite non-alcoholic summer-rebuttal beverages.

Slush with Nerds Sonic Drive-In

It sure didn't take me long to get nerdy on you. Get it? Cuz Sonic has an option where you can order your slush with Nerds candy

in it. And it's amazing. Fun fact: Did you know that Nerds were invented when they tried to find a use for the leftover rounded off bits of Everlasting Gobstoppers? Yup. If you thought slushes in general were great on a dogdaisical day, you must also know that Sonic's are some of the best around because, unless you let it sit too long, you actually drink SLUSH and not JUST the melted stuff at the bottom where your straw reaches. You're drinking slush. Not flavored sugar water with a layer of slush on top of it. And then we add the Nerds. To paraphrase Belushi, Nerds have been on my training table since I was a kid. I have a very clear memory of my older brother accidentally spilling a bunch of Nerds on the sidewalk and me coming back when no one was watching to pick every last tiny tart bastard I could find. My favorite thing to do with this treat is to take my straw, drive it down into the slush, cork off the end with my finger, and draw it back out creating kind of a slushy core sample. Then I deposit it into my mouth and give myself a point for each Nerd I capture. Pro tip: Upgrade the classic (for good reason) cherry-flavored slush to cherry limeade flavor. You'll be glad you did.

Lemon Ice Cooler Culver's

Don't be fooled. Last time I was at Culver's, their lemon ices weren't anywhere on the drive-thru menu, but I was still able to order them. Culver's takes the classic lemon Italian ice, and instead of making it something you have to (or GET to, depending on your opinion of Italian ice) forcefully shave off layers with your flimsy-ass spoon, they blend it up sippably smooth with real fruit flavors of your choice blended all up with it. It's awesome. And if you're not familiar enough

with the classic lemon ice to get the drift, just imagine being allowed to eat frozen lemonade concentrate straight from the can. It's incredible and refreshing and it's so smooth, and the real fruit chunks mixed with the familiar artificial fruit flavors gives you the best of both worlds. Artificial cherry flavor tastes nothing like real cherries, of course, but it turns out that they're two great tastes that taste great together.

Mach One Jumble Coffee Co.

Did you know they make tiramisu-flavored syrup for coffee drinks? I know! It sounds obvious now that I mention it. Of course they make something like that, right? But let's think about this for a second. Tiramisu is made with ladyfingers dipped in coffee. And you're putting that flavor... into coffee. So... you're adding more coffee flavor... to your coffee. You see where I'm going with this? It's a coffee turducken. But that's not the whole story with the Mach One. See, you'd think that "Mach One" might be a reference to macchiato, a popular coffee drink. Nope. Let me lay it all out for you: A Mach One features tiramisu AND caramel flavors, with two extra shots of espresso. You don't even have to ask for extra shots. Unless you have an unhealthy relationship with caffeine. The "Mach" refers to the boost you're getting. I always feel a little bad about making folks dirty another dish for me, but I recommend ordering the Mach One blended. It kicks it up to at least Mach 3.

Chocolate Malt Beecher's Ice Cream & Yogurts

Yes, a simple chocolate malt. And when I say "malt" I mean malt. Milkshakes are boring, no disrespect to Kelis. Her particular milkshake STILL brings this

boy to the yard. Give me that malted milk powder. Give me all of it. Pro tip: Want diner-quality pancakes from your pancake mix? Add a little malted milk powder. One of my earliest memories is having a little bit of my mom's malt she made for herself when she thought I was asleep. Blender woke me up. My mom worked as a soda jerk in high school, and she was the kind who held on to her skills. Beecher's is the closest to mom's. At Beecher's, you can go ahead and get crazy with the flavors if you want to. They always have an interesting take on classic ice cream flavors (their chocolate mint comes to mind) as well as some flavors of their own device (too many examples to think straight). But for me, it always comes back to chocolate. Always. And watching the pros at Beecher's portion out the ice cream (for a simple chocolate malt they make it easy on themselves and use soft-serve), the chocolate syrup, the malt powder, and a splash of milk, and then blend it all up in one of those devices that still uses the same basic design my mom used back in her day is what summer is all about for me. ■

SUBMIT YOUR DINING SUGGESTIONS!

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

BUT WAIT... THERE'S MORE!
VIEW OUR DINING ARCHIVE
DUBUQUE365.COM/DINING

