



# BRAZEN OPEN KITCHEN|BAR

REVISITED  
BY RICH BELMONT

One of the meanings of the word premier is “First in importance or rank”. By that definition Brazen Open Kitchen|Bar is most certainly the Premier Restaurant in Dubuque. The name Brazen was chosen because it means audacious, bold, daring and fearless. These traits are all exhibited by Brazen’s owner and Executive Chef Kevin Scharpf and his young and talented staff.

Brazen opened Feb. 10, 2015 at the corner of Washington and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets in the Millwork District of Dubuque. It is located in a former millwork factory built between 1880 and 1906. In 1938 that factory was known as the Carr, Adams and Collier Company (CARADCO). It manufactured over thirty million doors and fifty-five million windows. CARADCO products were used in the White House, West Point Military Academy, Northwestern University and the University of Iowa (source: Encyclopedia Dubuque).

Gronen Restoration painstakingly transformed the building into the showpiece edifice it is today. The upper floors are CARADCO Lofts comprised of 72 modern one and two bedroom apartments.

Brazen is located on the main floor in a space known as the Schmid Innovation Center. Major infrastructure improvements in this area were made possible through the generous funding provided by Dick and Carrie Schmid and family. Dick was Senior Vice President of Crescent Electric Supply Company and an enthusiastic supporter and philanthropic donor to many Dubuque projects. Sadly, Dick Schmid passed away on April 25, 2017. He was 65 years old.



Kevin Scharpf is now the sole owner and Executive Chef of Brazen. He is a native of Galena, IL and although he is only 30 he has been working in commercial kitchens for 16 years. First he was a Line Cook at Woodland’s

Restaurant, Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa in Galena. He loved cooking so he went to Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts, Mendota Heights, MN and was awarded an Associate’s Degree in Culinary Arts.

While going to school he worked full time in the fine dining restaurant La Fougasse (foo-gahs) in the Hotel Sofitel (sew-fi-tel) in Minneapolis. (Fun Fact: fougasse is the French version of Italy’s focaccia bread). La Fougasse is now closed but it once was considered the finest French Restaurant in Minneapolis. The night I dined there the Vikings Football Team was in the private party room.

After graduating Kevin was invited to be a Chef de Partie (line cook) at Restaurant Daniel. This prestigious French Restaurant is in Manhattan’s Upper East Side. It is owned by famous Restaurateur and Chef Daniel Boulud. It is a Michelin 2 Star, New York Times 4 Star and winner of a James Beard Outstanding Restaurant Award.

Kevin returned to Dubuque and was Executive Chef at the Captain Merry in East Dubuque, IL. Next he was appointed Executive Sous Chef at Diamond Jo Casino in Dubuque. While there he won First Place Chef Par Excellence Award in the Iowa Pork Producers Association 2014 Taste of Excellence Contest.

Chef Kevin continues to rack up awards and accolades both for himself and for Brazen. He has been recognized as one of the 40 Rising Stars under age 40 in 2016 by FSR (Full Service Restaurant) Magazine. This is a terrific honor considering he was chosen from over 1,000 candidates. He was also awarded the 2015 Golden Ladle from Dubuque Food and Wine’s Soup Off!

Brazen received the 2015 Best New Restaurant Award from Dubuque Main Street and 2015 Most Promising New Business Award from the Dubuque Chamber of Commerce. Brazen was voted Best Restaurant 2016 from Best Fest and received the 2016 Impact Award for Dining from 365ink Magazine.



MATTHEW PLOESSL, STEPHANIE MIHALAKIS, SAMANTHA OYEN, AND JON ROLLING

Samantha Oyen is the Sous Chef. She is from Dubuque and received her Culinary Arts degree from Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, IA. She previously cooked at Olive Garden and was a chef on Celebrity Cruise Ship Eclipse.

Matthew Ploessl is Pastry Sous Chef. He worked with Kevin at the Diamond Jo Casino for six years. The Front Manager is Stephanie Mihalakis. She gained experience in food service while working at Copper Kettle in Dubuque and at the Diamond Jo Casino. The Bar is managed by Jon Rolling who was previously with Eronel and Busted Lift.

Brazen is a scratch kitchen. This means everything used in food preparation is made from primary ingredients



sourced as locally as possible. Pastas, marinades, sauces and condiments are all prepared from fresh ingredients. The kitchen does not have a freezer so nothing is ever frozen.

Some of the local growers are:

1. Berkwood Farms, Des Moines, IA – a coalition of over 50 independent family farms raising 100% certified pure heirloom Berkshire Pork.
2. Micro Girl, LLC, Dubuque, IA – owned by Laura Klavitter, a horticulturist who grows tender greens.
3. Fifth Season Co-op, Viroqua, WI – provides year-round access to local food.
4. Roelli Cheese Haus, Shullsburg, WI – Kevin is currently using Cheesemaster Chris Roelli’s Red Rock Cheddar and Dunburton Blue Cheese. Chris spikes classic English style cheddar with Penicillium Roqueforti. Once the mold begins to flourish the cheese is pressed to stop mold growth allowing only a hint of blue.
5. Jim Rang Farm, Dubuque, IA – Shiitake mushrooms.
6. Mike Breitbart Garden, Durango, IA – peppers for hot sauce.

Certified organic produce is purchased locally when in season from King’s Hill Farm, Mineral Point, WI; Two Onion Farm, Belmont, WI; Small Family Farm, La Farge, WI and Mad Fish Farms in Dyersville, IA. This last one grows vegetables in climate controlled greenhouses using Hydroponics and Aquaponics methods.



Brazen also sponsors a large plot at Four Mounds Community Gardens. This farm patch is cultivated by Paul Goldstein and is just 5 miles away from the restaurant.

Fresh mints, basil, wild watercress, lettuce, leeks, Brussel sprouts, sweet corn, turnips, radishes, carrots, tomatoes and peppers are just some of the vegetables grown exclusively for Brazen.

Brazen is now open for Sunday Brunch! This is exciting because now we can experience sophisticated Sunday morning meals prepared entirely from scratch using extreme French Kitchen Culinary Techniques.

Here are some of the delights awaiting you on Sunday mornings:

- Pop Tart – this is no ordinary the pop tart. Fresh dough is rolled into a pocket and is stuffed with a brown sugar and butter filling. It is glazed with a maple icing.
- Cinnamon Roll – this is spectacular! Butter is rolled into laminated dough to create layers so the roll is flaky and light. There is a bold cinnamon taste complimented by a brown butter cream cheese frosting on top.
- Bacon – pork belly is cured in-house. It is placed in a pink salt brine and flipped every day for 7 days. Then it is smoked in house, rinsed and dried. The bacon has a spicy streusel (stroof-zuhl) topping. Jalapeños are pulverized into a powder and mixed into a crumbly mixture of fat, flour and sugar for a sweet spicy flavor.
- Grapefruit Brûlée – if you like grapefruit with a little sugar on top you will love this because the sugar is caramelized. (Fun Fact: caramelizing sugar means melting it until it becomes a caramel color. It takes 340°F to make this happen).
- House Yogurt – this is so creamy and not anything like grocery store yogurt. Milk is heated to 180°F and then reduced to 110°F. A live culture is added and the mixture rests overnight. Then the whey (liquid) is separated from the fat.
- Brioche French Toast – (bree-ohsh) bread is enriched with eggs and butter and is turned several times by hand while it rises for 3 hours.
- Pork Belly Eggs Benedict – in-house ham cured. Pork is placed in a wet cure ham style marinade for 7 days. The mixture contains celery, mustard seed, peppercorns, bay leaf and fennel. The cooked pork and two poached eggs are placed on an East Mill Bakeshop English muffin and topped with a very light hollandaise sauce.



I recommend you enjoy a Sunday cocktail like the Brazen Bloody Mary or Bourbon Iced Tea or try one of my favorites:

- Mimosa – champagne and chilled orange juice
- French 75 – Bombay Sapphire Gin, Prosecco sparkling wine, lemon juice, sugar and a slice of lemon peel. (Fun Fact: so named because this drink’s kick feels like you are being bombarded by artillery from French 75 mm field guns!)



The dinner menu at Brazen is always evolving so it is good idea to visit often so you don’t miss out on any of Chef Kevin’s culinary masterpieces. Here are some of the current favorites:

- Duck Tacos – duck confit with pickled vegetables on corn tortillas.
- Jumbo Lump Crab – made from very expensive pure 100% lump crabmeat with cipollini onions.
- Fried Soft Egg – a seven minute poached egg placed on bread then nestled into a bed of peperonata (stewed peppers, onions and tomatoes) and covered with a foaming hollandaise.
- House Potato Chips – these are gourmet chips. Fried potatoes spritzed with olive oil and sprinkled with tapioca maltodextrin powder, lemon zest, parsley and pecorino cheese. Pecorino (pec-o-ree-no) is a reference to several hard Italian cheeses made from sheep’s milk. The most popular one is Pecorino Romano. (Fun fact: Pecorino comes from the Italian word for sheep: pecora).
- Crusts – these are very unusual flatbread pizzas. For example: One consists of Masala curry, red pepper, caramelized onion, spinach, mozzarella, peanuts and cilantro. How’s that for a combination of ingredients!
- Short Ribs – braised in sherry with a parsnip purée (paste). This dish is all about onion flavors and textures. That’s why the ribs are covered with pickled shallots, green onion tempura, cipollini onions and burnt onion purée.
- Fried Chicken – It’s coated with a homemade egg white and flour batter and served with a leek bread pudding.
- Salmon – cooked in a lemon Thai broth made with lemongrass, fresh lemons, ginger, garlic, and fish sauce.
- Chicken Roulade (roo-lahd) – French word for “rolled” and infers the meat is stuffed with something. In this dish chicken parts are ground and marinated in Founders All Day IPA Session Ale. The addition of kale and cherries makes for an earthy dish with a hint of sweetness.
- Ribeye – this twenty ounce Black Angus steak is provided by Iowa Premium Beef in Tama, IA. It is braised in a signature Brazen Gastrique (gahs-treek): a sweet and sour sauce made with red wine vinegar, sugar and seasonings. It is used to cut the beef fat without altering the beef flavor.



The Blackboard Menu entrées are replaced every three weeks. They are designed to showcase the creativity and advanced kitchen skills of the kitchen staff.

Don’t forget to enjoy one of Brazen’s homemade scrumptious desserts! Choose the Pots de Crème, Crème Brûlée, Donuts with chocolate syrup or Cheesecake with caramel topping.



The Millwork District continues to grow with new and exciting places to visit and hang out with friends. Experience the neighborhood’s atmosphere at the bar or from a table on the front porch of Brazen Open Kitchen|Bar.

## BRAZEN OPEN KITCHEN|BAR

955 WASHINGTON STREET, DUBUQUE, IA 52001  
563-587-8899 • BRAZENOPENKITCHEN.COM  
FACEBOOK.COM/BRAZENOPENKITCHEN

**Hours:** Bar: Tue–Sat: 4:30 PM–Close  
Sun: 10 AM–2 PM; Mon: Closed

Kitchen: Tue–Thu: 4:30–9 PM; Fri–Sat: 4:30–10 PM;  
Mon: Closed; Sunday Brunch: 10 AM–2 PM

**Dining Style:** Casual Fine Dining

**Noise Level:** Comfortable

**Recommendations:** Brunch: Cinnamon Roll, House Yogurt, Brioche French Toast, Carrot Cake Pancake, Pork Belly Eggs Benedict, Fried Chicken Biscuits  
Dinner: Duck Tacos, Jumbo Lump Crab, Leek Fondue, Potato Chips, Brussel Sprout Caesar Salad, Curry Crust, Short Ribs, Fried Chicken, Salmon, Chicken Roulade, Ribeye Steak with Wine Gastrique

**Liquor Service:** Full Bar, Margarita, Manhattan, Bloody Mary, French 75

**Prices:** Brunch: \$5–\$12; Dinner: \$7–\$36

**Pay Options:** Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards except AMEX, Local Checks, ATM in building

**Accessibility:** Front and Back Door Ramps, Restrooms

**Kids Policy:** Ask Server for Menu Choices, Booster-Yes, High Chair-Yes

**Reservations:** Highly Recommended

**Catering:** Yes • **Take Out:** Yes • **Delivery:** No

**Parking:** On Street – Washington, Ninth and Tenth Streets, Transit Center Parking Ramp at Ninth and Washington Streets