



BUDDY'S CLUBHOUSE

2364 Washington St, DBQ • 563-588-9932 • BuddysClubhouse.com

HOURS: Bar: Tue-Sat 1- Close; Dinner: Wed-Thu 5-9 pm; Fri-Sat 5-10 pm
DINING STYLE: Neighborhood Bar & Restaurant, **NOISE LEVEL:** Energetic
RECOMMENDATIONS: Homemade Soups, Daily Off Menu Specials, Top Sirloin, BBQ Pork Ribs, Liver and Onions, Broasted Chicken, Jumbo Shrimp, Smothered Chicken Breasts, Shrimp Scampi
LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar, Beer on Tap; Domestic Beer only in cans
PRICE RANGE: Appetizers: \$2.95 - \$7.45, Entrées: \$5.45 - \$16.95
RESERVATIONS: From 2 to 12. Good idea; Only 10 tables!
PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Checks, Debit, Credit Cards except AMEX
ACCESSIBILITY: Five Steps, **KIDS POLICY:** Welcome; Kids Menu with no age limit, High Chairs and Boosters
CATERING: Yes; Private parties on Sun or Mon, **TAKE OUT:** Yes
DELIVERY: No **PARKING:** On Street or use the Comisky Park Parking Lot



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My friend Curt Martin of Runde Buick fame suggested we go to Buddy's Clubhouse in Dubuque for dinner. He said this little restaurant with only ten tables was the North End's Little Secret. Indeed I had never heard of it and neither did Bryce Parks, the Publisher of 365ink and lifelong Dubuquer.



What a pleasant surprise! This unassuming bar and restaurant is tucked away on the corner of Washington and 24th Streets across from Comisky Park. Buddy Spiegelhalter and his wife Terri, are celebrating their 14th year serving excellent dinners in Dubuque's North End District. For many years this restaurant was owned and operated by Buddy's Uncle Bob. Buddy used to help out at night when he was working during the day at the Dubuque Packing Company. While at The Pack Buddy became a skilled meat cutter. So that's why even today he insists on hand cutting all the restaurant's meats.



Buddy and Terri took over this neighborhood hot spot in January, 1998 and reopened the restaurant as Buddy's Clubhouse on March 6th of that year. Right from the start they had their own ideas on how to run a premier food establishment. For example, only USDA Choice Grade beef is used. It is never frozen and is hand cut the same day it is to be served.

Only real butter is used and sauces, soups, gravies and mashed potatoes are made in-house. The chicken is hand breaded and the shortening in the Broaster is changed after every 60 pieces of chicken. There is a separate fryer for fish so there is no flavor crossover.



I suspect Dubuque's North Enders will not be too happy I am giving away their secret. The regulars know Buddy and Terri serve dinners the same way they entertain in their own home. First they offer you some appetizers. Perhaps a combo basket with four of your favorite starters choosing from onion rings, breaded mushrooms, cheddar nuggets, French fries, mozzarella sticks, chicken strips or mini tacos.



Then you help yourself to the soup and salad bar. The lettuce and other salad items are always fresh and the dressings are name brand Hidden Valley. The soups are veritable works of art. Terri has over 65 cookbooks and she is always trying out new recipes.



On a recent visit we had Beef Tortellini soup. It was delicious and how could it be otherwise. Instead of using a beef stock Terri made it with the Au Jus from the Prime Rib. Another popular soup is the Stuffed Green Pepper; made from all the ingredients found in a dinner of stuffed green peppers. The most requested soup, however, is Kohlrabi available from mid July to the end of August. Buddy grows the edible bulbous stalks himself. He uses a special hybrid pale green variety that grows to be 8 to 10 pounds. They have a mild, fresh taste not unlike water chestnuts and do not get coarse or woody. Terri cooks them the same way she makes potato soup.

The char-broiler is in constant use. There are at least seven burgers on the menu including the popular Patty Melt, BBQ Burger, Mushroom & Swiss and Bacon & Cheese. If your taste runs to the unusual try the Philly Steak burger or the Carmichael. The



steaks are all excellent! Each day Buddy cuts only what he expects to sell that night. The Ribeye is always sweet and tender. So is the Roasted Prime Rib available on Friday and Saturday nights. This is my favorite because I order it finished off on the char-broiler. This gives it a nice blackened flavor and seals in all the juices. On a recent Saturday night a Porterhouse Steak was one of the off-menu specials (pictured bottom right). The huge 18 oz. steak was cooked perfectly and was served under a thick layer of sautéed onions and mushrooms. The most popular steak, by far, is the Center Cut Top Sirloin. Buddy carefully slices a Choice Top Butt choosing only the cuts he knows will be tender. The regulars expect the Sirloin Steaks to be melt-in-your-mouth quality.

A couple of my guests kept asking an interesting question. How does a little place next to Comisky Park serve such delicious seafood? One of my friends marveled at the Stuffed Salmon. This dinner consisted of three fillets filled with crabmeat stuffing, then broiled in a convection oven and covered with homemade dill sauce. Another friend enjoyed the Pasta Alfredo tossed in homemade white sauce béchamel made with parmesan cheese, parsley and garlic and topped with a generous serving of shrimp and crabmeat. The Jumbo Shrimp is a big seller too. Not only are the jumbo shrimp lightly breaded and deep fried golden brown but you get twelve of them!

There are always off-menu specials and on this night there was a Citrus Peppercorn Tilapia with two flamed seared, then broiled fillets. Another special was Catfish Collars. Breaded and fried farm raised catfish are always on the regular menu. But every once in a while Terri is able to get Mississippi raised catfish filet strips called collars. These are a prized specialty because there are no bones and there is no fishy taste.



The chicken dishes are a delight. The Fried Chicken is marinated, hand breaded and then cooked in the high pressure Broaster. The Cordon Bleu is char-broiled and topped with ham and Swiss cheese. But the stunner dish is the smothered Chicken Breast. Imagine two char-broiled breasts smothered with sautéed onions, mushrooms and melted Swiss cheese.



There is always a group of friendly regulars at the bar. But Buddy's is also a good place to take the children. First, Buddy's location makes getting there an adventure. Second, the food is the just like Grandma's. Third, there is the train made out of Jim Beam Bourbon bottles to check out. And fourth, the kids will enjoy Buddy's famous Lionel O gauge trains circling the bar every half hour. There are two of these. The passenger train is fun to watch but the kids really like the freight train. That's because it stops along its route and drops candy into the hands of the eager little ones.