



# FOUNDRY RESTAURANT/BAR

STORY BY RICH BELMONT  
PHOTOS BY BOB FELDERMAN AND RICH BELMONT

Foundry Restaurant/Bar opened for on January 12, 2018. It has only been operating for two weeks and already it is a resounding success. How could it not? First of all it is owned by Bob Johnson and is located in Dubuque’s Millwork District in the Novelty Iron Works Building. Bob owns the entire building and besides he is not new to the restaurant business. He is an architect, developer, preservationist and a restaurateur.

Bob is President of Novelty Iron Works Companies. He holds both an MBA and a Master of Architecture Degree from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is an investor in East Mill Bakeshop & Catering and was the owner and operator of the now closed premier fine dining restaurant—The Captain Merry.



Secondly, Foundry’s success can largely be attributed to all the extremely talented and very experienced people Bob has recruited to contribute to his latest project.

Some of these experts are:

Bethany Golembeski – She is the architect who has planned and executed the entire renovation process of the Novelty Iron Works Building. She has a degree in Anthropology from the University of Michigan and a Master’s Degree in Architecture from the University of Illinois and is a Master Designer.

Jeff Holder, President, Millwork Marketplace – He is a highly talented and experienced 30 year veteran of the Food and Beverage Industry. He has owned and managed several restaurants in Galena, IL and the surrounding area and is perhaps best known as the owner of the now closed Cafe Italia.

Nick Puls, Executive Chef – He began his career as dishwasher and short order cook at the Village Inn in Dubuque. He later graduated from Kendall College Culinary Arts School in Chicago. He returned to Galena and cooked at Fried Green Tomatoes. He then moved to the Napa Valley where he cooked at several prestigious restaurants including Napa Valley Grille, Model Bakery and the famous JoLê in Calistoga, CA. Nick continues to be the Executive Chef at East Mill Bakeshop & Catering.

Araceli DeWitt, General Manager – She goes by Celi, pronounced (sell-lee). She has a BA Degree in Culinary Management from the Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago. She has been in the industry 13 years as a cook at Margaritas, Pastry Chef and Sous Chef at Koda Bistro and Front of the House Manager and Kitchen Manager at Houlihans all in Chicago. Celi’s mentor was renowned French Chef Aaron Browning.

Bryan VanDerZyl, Assistant General Manager – He has been in the industry for 32 years. He worked at Fried Green Tomatoes, University Food Services and Café Italia. He was Beverage Manager at Diamond Jo Casino and Food & Beverage Manager at Chestnut Mountain Resort.

Emily Puls, Pastry Chef/Bakery Operations – Emily graduated from the Baking and Pastry Chef program at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone Saint Helena, CA. She was a Pastry Chef Assistant at Redd in Yountville where she baked alongside acclaimed Northern California Pastry Chef Nicole Plue and Executive Chef Richard Reddington. She gained invaluable experience baking with Rising Stars Award Winning Chefs Matt and Sonija Spector at JoLê. Emily is in charge of all baking operation for Foundry and East Mill Bakeshop.

Dawn Livingston, Food & Beverage Manager – For over 25 years she has been a bartender, server, and manager. Dawn is well known as a Front of the House Specialist.

Professor Tom Metcalf, Artist – Tom is a graphics expert and is responsible for Foundry’s logo and menu design.

Novelty Iron Works began manufacturing operations on January 1, 1876. According to Encyclopedia Dubuque the usual



ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER BRIAN VANDERZYL, GENERAL MANAGER CELI DEWITT, MILLWORK MARKETPLACE PRESIDENT JEFF HOLDER, AND FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER DAWN LIVINGSTON



workforce of 50 men produced machinery for flour mills, saw mills, steam engines, water wheels and well-drilling machines.

The building became part of Caradco and was also headquarters of Eagle Window and Door for 50 years. Eagle moved out in 2000 and it sat empty for five years. So in 2005 Bob Johnson purchased the building and began working with the City of Dubuque’s development plans as part of the Millwork District Revitalization. (Fun Fact: The opening scene of the 1957 movie *The Pajama Game* starring Doris Day and John Raitt was filmed right in front of Foundry Restaurant on Washington Street.)

Bob’s vision for the Novelty Iron Works Building is almost complete. There are 76 apartments on the top two floors and an 84 room boutique hotel will soon open on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The first floor houses Backpocket Taproom, The Iron Bar, Millwork Marketplace with 15 retail kiosks in place and another 15 to be added soon, Wagener Art Gallery and Millwork Ballroom which is already catering private parties up to 450 people.

Novelty Mart Convenience Store, a Spa, and East Mill Bread Company serving breakfast and lunch will open soon. There is also 12,000 square feet of space reserved for office space rentals.

The total investment so far including the build-out of the entire renovation, apartments, bars and restaurants is approaching \$40 million!

The Foundry Restaurant is not a typical restaurant. It is designed to be a laid-back casual place serving comfort food made from home recipes you would expect to eat in mom’s or grandma’s kitchen.

The architecture, ambience and décor of the whole building and especially the Foundry are all part of Bethany’s masterpiece. She is responsible for the design and decor. (Fun Fact: Only the huge chandelier hanging over the round 8-top was selected by Bob. He loves it: me not so much!)

The restaurant features an open kitchen and the bar specializes in classic cocktails like Old Fashioned, Daiquiri, Sidecar, Whiskey Sour and Manhattan. The Iron Bar in the middle of the building is more for modern craft cocktails.

Foundry has a well-thought-out wine list with many intriguing possibilities. The Red and White list offers only wines rated 90 points or above. The quality score for each wine is noted in its description. This score is determined from a rating system. A typical system uses a scale from 50 to 100 points reflecting the opinions of professional wine tasters. The best known ratings are from Wine Spectator, Wine Enthusiast, and Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate magazines. Here is Robert Parker’s rating chart:

- 96–100: An extraordinary wine of profound and complex character
- 90–95: An outstanding wine
- 80–89: Above average to very good wine
- 70–79: Average wine with little distinction
- 60–69: Below average wine containing noticeable deficiencies
- 50–59: Unacceptable

There is another list called “Diamonds in the Rough”. These are exceptional wines that have not been rated.

So why are they called Diamonds and while you are thinking about it why are there Diamond Plate Specials on the menu, you ask? Well, if you look down you will notice the wood flooring is separated by sections of diamond plate which is part of the building. You will also notice your menu is attached to a diamond plate clipboard. So Diamonds in the Rough are unrated but delicious wines and Diamond Plate Specials are delicious meals prepared from homemade recipes. (Fun Fact: Pretty soon you will be able to take one of your family’s special recipes into the restaurant. If the chefs decide to use it they will serve it as a monthly Diamond Plate Special!)

There are currently nine Shareables on the menu so there is something for everybody. Here are a few examples:

- Harvest Board – Current selections are Genoa Salami, Prosciutto, Dill Havarti, Danish Blue Cheese and Chutney (chuht-nee). Celi prepares this chutney by stewing apples with vinegar, red chile flakes, salt, honey and raisins.
- Bluepoint Oysters – from Connecticut side of Long Island Sound. They are served with a French Mignonette (mee-nyohn-EHT) sauce. This is made from crushed black peppercorns, red wine, minced shallots and sugar. (Fun Fact: these oysters are semi-wild. In the summer clean oyster shells are spread on cleared spots of ocean bottom. Baby oyster spat attaches to the clean shells and is left to grow for 10 months. Then the young oysters are transferred to other growing beds and when fully grown are harvested by dredge).
- Green Garlic Spinach Dip – spinach is blended with garlic butter, tarragon and parsley.



- Crab Cakes – red and green peppers, red onion, whole grain mustard, mayo and panko bread crumbs are mixed with crab claw meat and egg.

The salads are very good particularly the Spinach Salad. Spinach is tossed with egg, cherry tomato, bacon, croutons and mushrooms and is served with a traditional Brittany Dressing. A typical Brittany goes very well with spinach. It is made from bacon, sugar, vinegar and sour cream.

I love the Onion Soup so much I have ordered it 3 times already! It is made from caramelized onions, thyme and lots of garlic. The onions are covered with white wine and reduced. Chicken stock and demiglace are added and cooked for 45 minutes. Then it is finished with port wine. A combination of provolone and Swiss cheese are baked over the crock.

Here is a sampling of some of the entrées:

- Spicy Thai Rice Noodles – a broth is made with vegetable stock, shiitake (shee-TAH-kay) mushrooms, green onions, shallots, garlic, ginger, curry powder, white miso, broccoli and tofu.
- Homestyle Stuffed Peppers – green bell peppers are stuffed with brown rice, ground Veggie Burger, tomato sauce, onions, carrots and celery.
- Grandma Phyllis Johnson’s Meatloaf – ground beef, spices, tomato, onion, green peppers and saltines topped with ketchup.
- Roasted Sweet and Spicy Chicken – covered with a sweet and spicy sauce.
- Foundry Meatballs – ground beef and pork, onions, green peppers prepared according to a secret family recipe.
- Fresh Catch of the Day – the daily seafood could be anything. In recent days there was Marlin, Mussels, Salmon and Fresh Haddock. Margie enjoyed the salmon with a brown butter and lemon glaze alongside butternut squash.



Diamond Plate Specials are made from home cooking recipes. There are two on the current menu:

- Grandpa José Valenciano’s Chicken Soup – This is Celi’s grandfather’s recipe. Whole chicken is removed from the bones and simmered with spices, zucchini, corn and carrots.
- Swiss Steak and Potatoes – This is Celi’s other grandfather Bob Johnson’s recipe. It is prepared from tenderized chuck steak, covered in flour and seasonings, then seared and stewed in tomato sauce with green pepper, onions and potatoes.

There are 3 steaks on the menu. Of course the Ribeye is Iowa’s most popular steak. It is so flavorful because of all the fat marbling throughout. However, if you want to try a really flavorful steak may I suggest the Steak Frites? This is just a fancy way of saying steak and French fries but this is a winner because the steak served here is a Hanger Steak: a muscle that does no work and is therefore very tender and flavorful. A Hanger Steak should always be ordered rare to medium rare: It will become chewy but still taste great if it is cooked to a higher temperature.

(Hint: all burgers and steaks are grilled on a charbroiler. If you prefer, you can order yours cooked on the flat top grill.)

After you have a satisfying and delicious dinner your server will tell you about the sumptuous desserts. They change frequently and the current choices are Fried Apple Pie, Bar Trio (Lemon, Truffle, and Coconut Cream Bars) and Chocolate Crème Brûlée (I can’t get enough of this one). There is also a nightly dessert special. On my last visit this was a wonderful Pineapple Upside Down Carrot Cake.

Foundry Restaurant/Bar is the new place in town and people are quickly discovering—“This is Where We Play.”

## FOUNDRY RESTAURANT/BAR

10<sup>TH</sup> & WASHINGTON STREETS, DUBUQUE, IA 52001  
563-855-7005 • MILLWORKMARKETPLACE.COM

**Hours:** Sun–Thu: 4:30–9 PM; Fri–Sat: 4:30–10 PM  
**Dining Style:** Casual  
**Noise Level:** Comfortable  
**Recommendations:** Green Garlic Spinach Dip, Bluepoint Oysters, Grilled Shrimp Cocktail, Crab Cakes, Fried Chicken Strips, French Onion Soup, Spicy Thai Rice Noodles, Homestyle Stuffed Peppers, Foundry Burger, Grandma’s Johnson Meatloaf, Roasted Sweet and Spicy Chicken, Foundry Meatballs, Fresh Catch of the Day, Grandpa Valenciano’s Chicken Soup, Swiss Steak and Potatoes, Steak Frites, Flat Iron Steak, Ribeye  
**Liquor Service:** Premium Bar, Classic Cocktails, Select Wines  
**Prices:** Shareables: \$5.95–\$9.95; Entrées: \$11.95–\$24.95  
**Pay Options:** Cash, Debit, All Major Credit Cards, NO Checks, ATM on premises  
**Accessibility:** Front Door and Restrooms  
**Kids Policy:** Menu, High Chairs, Boosters  
**Reservations:** Phone ahead seating  
**Catering:** Yes • **Take Out:** Yes • **Delivery:** No  
**Parking:** On Street. Also First Half of Lot at Corner of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Elm Street