

{ 365 dining: frank o'dowd's irish pub & grill }



Frank O'Dowd's Irish Pub & Grill

by Rich Belmont



Céad Míle Fáilte!

One Hundred Thousand Welcomes! This is the greeting you can expect when you visit Frank O'Dowd's Irish Pub & Grill in Galena, IL.

If you are planning to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day this weekend, perhaps with a little Irish whiskey or beer or some corned beef and cabbage, a real Irish Pub is the place to be. It's in the Irish Cottage Boutique Hotel and it's right on Highway 20 just 16 miles East and 22 minutes away from the Julien Dubuque Bridge.



Everyone is Irish this week-end. So join the party and celebrate Erin Go Bragh (Ireland Forever)! When you step into Frank O'Dowd's you will soon realize you went through the time travel portal and landed in the old country.

Because, you see, Jack Coulter and his cousin, Basil Conroy, owners of Frank O'Dowd's Irish Pub went through a great deal of trouble and expense to create a piece of Ireland right in Galena. They developed architectural drawings and then took them to Ireland. After meeting with several architects they contracted a Master Pub Builder in Gorey, County Wexford.



The contractor designed and handcrafted an entire pub by hand-turning wooden spindles and crafting the wood bar and furniture. Every detail was attended to including the magnificently etched mirrored glass behind the bar, the delicate stained glass windows, the cobalt and amber lighting and the slate tile. When the authentic Irish Pub was completed it was transported to Dublin, then placed on a small boat to England and shipped on a freighter to Canada. From there it was sent by train to Chicago and finally trucked to Galena where the Irish crew refitted it inside the Irish Cottage. When you visit you should take the time to notice the design. The front of the pub is representative of Victorian Dublin architecture. The center is decorated in shop style depicting the less wealthy people's type of pub and then the rear is warm and cozy with less adornment just like the gathering places of the



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poorer farmers. When you take a quick walk from front to back it's as if you went from the East Coast of Ireland, through the middle of the country, to the West Coast. You cannot help but notice you took a tour from the chandeliers, lace and Irish whiskey through the shops and onto the land where fish and chips, Shepherd's pie and corned beef and cabbage originated.

On either side of the bar you will notice the Snugs (bottom left). These are traditional secluded areas for private meetings or clandestine assignations. Of course, the Snug's occupants, being Irish, have direct access to the bar.

The pub is named in honor of Frank O'Dowd. He was a man who loved to have a good time and he was the father of Jack and Basil's mothers. He lived to be 98 years old (1902 – 2000) and his picture is hanging on the wall in the entranceway to the bar. By the way, this is another area you might want to look at. Displayed in beautiful cabinets are family photos and many antique artifacts from Ireland.

Basil grew up on an Irish farm and worked in many pubs. He gained a great deal of experience while living in England, France, North Carolina and New York City before settling down in Galena. He now runs Frank O'Dowd's with the assistance of Jack and Debbie Coulter who also own One Eleven Main in Galena and Vinny Vanucchi's in both Galena and Dubuque.



Frank O'Dowd's Irish Pub & Grill

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www.TheIrishCottageBoutiqueHotel.com

[Facebook.com/FrankODowds](https://www.facebook.com/FrankODowds)

HOURS: Mon-Thu: 4p.m.-1a.m., Fri-Sun: 11:30a.m.-1a.m.

Breakfast: 7 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

DINING STYLE: Casual, **NOISE LEVEL:** Energetic

RECOMMENDATIONS: Stuffed Mushrooms, Spuds O'Brien, Gaelic New York Strip, County Mayo Reuben, Peggy's Shepherd's Pie, Fish N Chips

LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar; Irish Whiskeys, Donegal Draft Beers, Keltic Kocktails

PRICE RANGE: Apps: \$8.95 - \$13.95; Entrees: \$11.95 - \$23.95

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards, No Checks, ATM in lobby

RESERVATIONS: No; large parties call ahead

ACCESSIBILITY: Front Door and Restrooms

KIDS POLICY: No Menu; High Chairs & Boosters available

CATERING: No, **DELIVERY:** No, **TAKE OUT:** Yes

PARKING: Large Hotel Parking Lot

Basil is quick to point out he doesn't run an authentic Irish Hotel and Pub by himself. He says he is very fortunate to have an experienced and talented staff. These include John Mazor, General Manager, Chef Roosevelt Martinez and Bar Manager Joy Ensign whom he calls his "Joy to the World".

So first and foremost Frank O'Dowd's is a pub. There are 11 American and Canadian Whiskeys or Bourbons, 15 Scotch Whiskeys and 16 Irish Whiskeys. You can choose from Bushmills Original, Contarf Classic, Jameson, Paddy, Tullamore Dew, and Knappogue Castle just to name a few. Although there are many ways to enjoy whiskey, it is best enjoyed in a snifter so you can swirl it releasing aromas and highlighting flavors. Once in the glass almost all whiskeys benefit from the addition of water which opens up the spirits and unloads the complex flavors. Since there are so many possibilities it is a good idea to check out the website and download the taste profiles of the current collection.

There is also a tremendous draught beer program no beer lover should pass up. The draught beer system is state of the art to ensure every beer is of optimum taste, color and temperature. Right now there are 16 County Donegal brews on tap. A few are Guinness Celtic Stout, Harp Celtic Lager, Bass Celtic Ale, Smithwicks Celtic Ale and Woodchuck Celtic Style Cider. If you find it hard to choose there is a 4 sample program so you can try a few different ones.



For those who prefer to skip the whiskey and beer there are all kinds of specialty drinks called Keltic Kocktails. Some of the most intriguing include the Dark Dubliner: Boru Irish Vodka, coffee liquor and Coke with a head of Guinness. Also the Irish Wolfhound: Boru Irish Vodka, coffee liquor, Coke and cream and the Orange Man: a subtle blend of O'Dowd's Irish Cream and orange liquor on the rocks.



I am happy to see the Gaelic Steak: a charbroiled New York Strip (regular New York Strip pictured) finished in Jameson Irish Whiskey and mushroom cream sauce on the menu. For lighter appetites there are the Fish N Chips (below) (try them with malt vinegar!), the county Mayo Reuben (above) with the right combination of corned beef, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese and 1000 Island Dressing and the Galway Burger, a half pound of freshly ground charbroiled beef served with lettuce, tomato and onion on a pretzel bun. Also on the menu is Peggy's Shepherd's Pie (below) which is a nicely seasoned ground beef, onions, carrots and peas baked in a casserole and topped with mashed potatoes.



The Irish Dancers from Mayer-McHugh School of Irish Dance regularly showcase traditional Irish dances on weekends and great Irish musical performers including Tony Leonard and Andreas Tranzo (pictured here) appear regularly. If you have never heard of Andreas you have been missing out. He is an accomplished storyteller, writer and musician from the Ocooch Mountains of Southwest Wisconsin. He is an amazing performer of traditional and contemporary Irish, English, Scottish and American folk music. He plays several instruments and is great with musical spoons. Andreas studied Irish music, history and culture at University of Limerick's Irish World Music Centre in Limerick, Ireland and worked for BingBangBong instrument designers in Northern Ireland.

Saint Patrick's Day this and every year promises to be an especially good time at Frank O'Dowd's Irish Pub & Grill who guarantees:

Ol' Céol Agus Craic!

(A good pint, great music and wonderful entertainment!)

