



Point Café
by Rich Belmont

Dubuque's North Enders in the Point Neighborhood have seen their local restaurant go through many transformations over the years. It first opened on June 1, 1954 as Point Drive-In serving Dairy-Creme ice cream. Years later it became The Point Restaurant. Then it was taken over by Randy Klauer or Klauer Construction Company. He completely remodeled it and renamed it Point Lounge. Then it went dark for a couple of years. I wonder



how many Point residents know it was brought back to life 4 years ago by a couple of guys from Albania. Well, OK, they are from Albania but they grew up in Elmhurst, IL. Ozzy Ramadani (pictured here with his daughter, Arta) and his brother-in-law, Jeff Dzeladini, have many years experience in the restaurant business. They owned and operated North Park Café in Rockford, IL and Elida in Edgerton, WI.



Where I come from Point Café would be called a diner. Breakfast is served all day and lunch starts at 11 am and is available the rest of the day along with all the dinner items. The menu is extensive: Breakfast includes 12 omelets, eggs any way you like them, 9 skilletts, pancakes, waffles, crepes, French toast and 6 steak and egg combinations. There are 26 sandwiches for lunch plus 6 burgers. You can choose any of the above for dinner or sink your teeth into a selection of choice grade, hand-cut steaks, chopped steak, pork tenderloins, baby beef liver, meatloaf, broiled, baked or fried chicken, stir fries, pastas and cod, shrimp, salmon and catfish. All soups, gravies and sauces are made in the kitchen. And the beef roasts, turkeys, chickens and pork loins are all cooked in the kitchen.



One thing Point Café has you don't see in New Jersey is the Midwestern soup and salad bar. The iceberg lettuce is always fresh and crisp and there are always a couple of other chef's choice salads like Greek or cucumber. Then there are the standards including fresh coleslaw, macaroni, and my favorite: potato salad.

Breakfast is all so good it is hard to pick favorites. A couple my tasting team liked is the Meat Lovers Skillet: bacon, ham, sausage piled on hash browns and topped with 3 eggs and your choice of cheese. Another great breakfast is simple and delicious scrambled eggs with American fries and ham (pictured at left). That's because the ham is a nice slice of hickory smoked, boneless top grade ham. By the way, all the egg dishes are made with 3 eggs and many items on the menu call for your choice of cheese. The choices are American, Swiss, cheddar, mozzarella and feta.



Did I mention all the soups are homemade? Jeff is an excellent soup maker. There are two on the menu each day and I have tried

several and enjoyed all of them. The soup schedule is as follows:
Mon: Navy Bean and Chicken Shell & Bean
Tue: Beef Barley and Chicken Bowtie
Wed: Chicken Dumpling and Beef & Cabbage
Thu: Cream of Potato & Ham and Beef & Rice
Fri: Clam Chowder and Beef & Vegetable
Sat: Chicken Noodle and Broccoli Cheese
Sun: Cream of Chicken Rice and Vegetable Beef



Ordering lunch can make for a difficult decision. Burgers are always good. The ground beef is always fresh never frozen. I had one topped with bacon, lettuce, tomato, pickles and American cheese. The Patty Melt is a 1/3 lb. burger on grilled rye bread with grilled onions and melted American cheese.



Point Café
 2370 Rhomberg Avenue, Dubuque, IA 52001
 563-513-6328 www.PointCafeDBQ.com
 Find them on Facebook
HOURS: Sun-Thu, 6 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri-Sat, 6 a.m.-10 p.m.
DINING STYLE: Family Diner
NOISE LEVEL: Conversational
RECOMMENDATIONS: Combination Platter, Meat Lovers Skillet, Fried Chicken, Roast Pork, Jumbo Shrimp, Meat Loaf, Fettuccine Alfredo, Top Sirloin Steak
LIQUOR SERVICE: None
PRICE RANGE: Breakfast: \$1.99 - \$9.99
 Lunch: \$4.59 - \$9.99 Dinner: \$6.99 - \$15.99
PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Debit, Local Checks, MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
ACCESSIBILITY: Front Door & Restrooms
KIDS POLICY: Menu, Booster, Highchairs
RESERVATIONS: Yes **PARKING:** Private Lot
CATERING: No **TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** No

The Gyro sandwich is a little unusual. A combination of pressed beef and lamb is roasted and stuffed into pita bread along with some onions and tomatoes.



There are so many dinners to choose from I sometimes have trouble picking just one. Of course I love a nice broiled steak topped with sautéed mushrooms. But the Meat Loaf is really good too. It's all ground beef with celery, onions, eggs, beef base, garlic, seasoning salt, oatmeal, and cracker meal. And so is the Fried Chicken. It's marinated in a brine solution and hand battered.

Considering this is not an Italian restaurant the pastas are quite tasty as well. The chef's spaghetti sauce is made with ground beef, sautéed onions, beef base, oregano, garlic, tomato juice and

marinara sauce. The Fettuccine Alfredo sauce is made separately for each individual order from whipping cream, garlic and parmesan cheese.



A member of my tasting team liked the Liver and Onions (above). It is coated with cracker meal and then grilled in butter. He said the accompanying onions were nicely caramelized. Ribs are roasted 8 to 10 hours and are covered with a homemade BBQ sauce. The roast beef (below) is a nice cut of inside round slow roasted and topped with thick beef gravy. Fried shrimp is a bargain since six Extra Jumbo (16/20 count) are only \$9.99!

The regulars at Point Café know to check the white board on the right wall just inside the entrance doors. This is where the Daily Specials are listed. The usual specials are:

- Sun - Roast Pork**
- Mon - Baked Cavatelli or Chuck Wagon (chopped steak with onions and American cheese).**
- Tue - Beef Tips**
- Wed - Lasagna**
- Thu - Fried Chicken**
- Fri & Sat - Prime Rib**



There is a whole list of other Daily Specials too. Some of them are exceptionally good deals. For example on Monday you can order all you can eat Spaghetti & Meatballs and on Thursday all you can eat Fried Chicken.

Some of these specials are not on the usual menu including the Lasagna and Beef tips. My favorite off-menu entrée is the Sunday Roast Pork (pictured at right). Seven large slices are served over an excellent stuffing and accompanied by mashed potatoes and gravy. It's a lot of food all for only \$7.99!

I have noticed many company dinners and family parties are held at Point Café. There is a private room for up to 45 people and groups of up to 80 can be accommodated. Small groups are usually served family style and larger ones enjoy a buffet.

So my fellow foodies here is a little tip. When you want a satisfying, filling meal and you don't want it to be fancy and you don't want to spend a lot of money; take a ride up Rhomberg Avenue and visit Point Café.

