



Water Street Market

by Rich Belmont

If I told you there is an extraordinary gourmet restaurant in a small town alongside the Mississippi River would you be interested? How about if I told you it's in a pleasant newly remodeled building and it's a showcase for a young talented chef who is truly imaginative in his practice of the culinary arts? Now I know I have your attention!



Well, it's called Water Street Market and it's right on Highway 52 in the middle of downtown Bellevue, Iowa. It's only 23.5 miles and a 30 minute ride from the Julien Dubuque Bridge. It is owned by Water Street Partners who also own The Happy Bean Coffee Shop, Off the Wall Art Gallery, Great River Gallery and Keil's Tavern. The President of Water Street Partners is Allen Ernst. He is a native of Bellevue and has restored several buildings in his hometown. His wife, Brenda Ernst is the General Manager of Water Street Market.

When Allen and Brenda decided to open a restaurant they were determined to make it a place where people could come and enjoy delicious innovative cuisine while exploring the beautiful Mississippi River, Lock & Dam 12 and Bellevue State Park. They wisely accomplished their goal by installing an experienced and talented kitchen staff in their establishment.



Head Chef Chad Myers received his degree in Culinary Arts from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts, Minneapolis/Saint Paul, MN in 2006. He then sharpened his skills as a chef at Potter's Mill, Bellevue; Eagle Ridge Resort, Galena; Wild Rose Casino, Clinton; and Champagne and Caroline's in Dubuque before returning to his hometown of Bellevue. Chef Myers has two dinner Sous Chefs who are Chris and Tayia Olszewski, a mother daughter team, and a Prep Cook Reene Roelandt. He is also fortunate to have Kathy Brooks as his Pastry Chef.

Every effort is made to insure all meals are prepared from fresh ingredients. This restaurant uses local suppliers whenever possible. For example, dairy products are provided by Bellevue Dairy and during the spring and summer produce is delivered from Mill Creek Farms also in Bellevue. Coffee is brewed by the Happy Bean inside the restaurant and the coffee is supplied by Badger Brothers Coffee in Platteville, WI.

Water Street Market is open every day for breakfast. All of the items sound so good choosing just one is a difficult decision. Some of the most popular breakfasts are Steak and Eggs, French Toast and Corn Pancakes. The steak is a Choice Grade 8 oz. Certified Angus Ribeye. The French toast is thick Texas toast dipped in custard batter and grilled until golden brown. The Corn Pancakes are made from a light corn muffin batter. Both the Toast and Pancakes are served with 100% Pure Wisconsin Grade A Maple Syrup.

Sunday brunch is a good time to visit too. Regular diners like the Build Your Own Omelets. Also very popular is the Eggs Florentine with poached eggs on toast, smoked Gouda cream, pulled pork, spinach, pesto hollandaise sauce and a sprinkling of crispy prosciutto. I know people who go on Sunday for the Banana Bread French Toast. The bread is fresh baked, coated and grilled and topped with bananas foster maple sauce and candied walnuts. When you go try the oven baked biscuits made with cheddar cheese and cracked black pepper.

Lunch favorites include the Entrée Salad: a spring mix with toasted almonds, dried cranberries, croutons, feta cheese, chicken breast and tossed with champagne vinaigrette. The Sirloin Steak and Mushroom Melt with red onion marmalade, smoked Gouda, bacon aioli on a hoagie roll is a most satisfying lunch. Come to think of it so are the Ahi Tuna Tacos with Chipotle lime dressing and pineapple salsa. And, of course, the burgers are fantastic! There are 5 different ones to try. The Guacamole and the Blue Cheese are terrific. So far my favorite is the Mushroom and Swiss (pitured above). It's loaded with mushrooms and totally covered with melted Swiss cheese.

By now you are beginning to understand Water Street Market is no ordinary small town diner. During the dinner hours on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, however, are when Chef Myers' creative skills are on full display. For example, the Catfish cakes are made with an avocado purée, sweet corn succotash and served with a chipotle and cilantro lime aioli. Another exciting

appetizer are the 16/20 (extra jumbo size) shrimp stuffed with both lump and claw crabmeat and wrapped with thick cherry wood smoked bacon.



The steaks are listed on the menu as Filet Mignon and Ribeye. You mustn't be fooled by the plain descriptions, though, because the artistry is in the toppings. The current menu features four of them: the local bourbon and green peppercorn glaze is truly astonishing. So is the blue cheese crumbles mixed with Panko bread crumb crust. The mushroom mélange (above) is a medley of sautéed Portabella and Crimini mushrooms enhancing an already scrumptious steak. The red wine demi-glaze is an exquisite mixture of brown stock and sauce combined with a high quality red wine.

Water Street Market

118 North Riverview Street, Bellevue, IA 52031
563-872-3164 Facebook.com/WaterStreetMarketBellevue

HOURS: Breakfast: 7-11 am, Lunch: 11 am - 3 pm

Dinner: 5 pm - 9 pm (Thu -Sat only), Sun Brunch: 7 am-3 pm

DINING STYLE: Casual **NOISE LEVEL:** Quiet

RECOMMENDATIONS: Steak & Eggs, Build Your Own Omelet, Steak & Mushroom Melt, Mushroom Swiss Burger, Ribeye, Pork Osso Bucco, Seafood Pesto Pasta, Halibut, Chicken Florentine, Nightly Features.

LIQUOR SERVICE: Basic Bar – Large Wine & Beer Selection

PRICES: Breakfast: \$4 - \$7; Apps: \$7 - \$9; Lunch: \$8 - \$10;

Dinner: \$15 - \$25

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Check, Debit, Visa, MasterCard

ACCESSIBILITY: Front and rear entrances & Restrooms.

KIDS POLICY: Menu, High Chairs & Boosters.

RESERVATIONS: Yes **CATERING:** Yes

TAKE OUT: Yes **DELIVERY:** No

PARKING: On Street, Rear Parking Lot, City Municipal Lot

The Osso Buco (right) prepared in this restaurant is a slow-cooked pork shank braised with an intriguing root beer demi-glaze. The Seafood Pesto Pasta (below) contains large chunks of crab, lobster, shrimp and bay scallops all sans shells tossed with a fresh basil pesto cream sauce over fettuccine. This dish is accompanied by a cheese bread of just baked bread covered with melted Asiago cheese. Then there is



the Chicken Florentine which I dare say is one of the best Florentine entrées I have ever had. Two chicken breasts are topped with sautéed mushrooms, onions and a generous heaping of spinach.

It is deglazed with sherry wine and Alfredo cream sauce and placed on top of a Rosemary polenta (below).



After a couple of visits to this restaurant I figured out it's a wise decision to choose one of the two nightly off-menu specials. They are always marvelous and exciting. Recently the Chef prepared Lamb Shank in a red-wine demi-glaze with polenta. On another night he presented Salmon Filets with morels, asparagus and Beurre Rouge. This is butter mixed with red wine and finely chopped shallots.

On a recent Saturday night my friend Bryce (the 365ink Publisher) ordered the Special Scallops (right). These were seared on top of hash made with potatoes, bacon, red pepper, onion, corn, basil pesto, lobster meat and reduced with clam juice and finished with butter. The scallops were topped with burnt orange, which are orange supremes (sections) burnt with a torch for color contrast. The dish was beautifully presented with a garnish of chiffonade basil. Bryce's lovely wife, Christy, requested gluten free Ribeye. This was pan sautéed with salt and pepper in olive oil and served with pan roasted potatoes and topped with Portabella mushrooms sautéed in garlic and deglazed with white



wine. It was accompanied by a medley of squash, zucchini, red peppers and corn. I chose the Cowboy Ribeye (below) with Fig Sauce Special. I can honestly say I enjoyed this dinner so much after I finished the last bite I was disappointed it was all gone. The well-marbled bone-in steak had a coffee, star anise, fennel seed, cumin, chili powder rub with spices that are toasted and ground in-house. The fig sauce had dried mission figs reconstituted in apple juice then added to a reduced red wine demi-glace with green peppercorns.



On Thursday nights there are specials called Build-Your-Own Pasta or Pizza. The pasta is prepared with your choice of ingredients and is all-you-can-eat. You pick penne, fettuccine, bowtie or tortellini pasta then alfredo, marinara, a la rosa (a mix of alfredo and marinara), pesto or scampi. Then choose your favorite protein such as chicken, shrimp, meatballs, bay scallops, andouille or chorizo sausage and any vegetables you like. The 13 inch pizza is made with homemade focaccia dough and is topped with your choice of the above ingredients. There are also pre-selected options such as Chicken Pesto or Hawaiian with Canadian bacon and pineapple available.



Remember I said Chef Myers was fortunate to have Kathy Brooks on his team? That's because she is an excellent baker! Not only does she do outstanding rolls including sweet potato, oatmeal or loaded baked potato with green onions and bacon (left) she also bakes fantastic desserts! During one of my visits my guests and I thoroughly enjoyed Pumpkin Cheese Cake (below), Peanut Butter and Chocolate Cheese Cake and Triple Layer Chocolate Cake.



All I can say, fellow foodies, is the residents of Bellevue are really lucky to have such a fine restaurant in their midst. And for the rest of us the short ride to Water Street Market is worth the trip!

