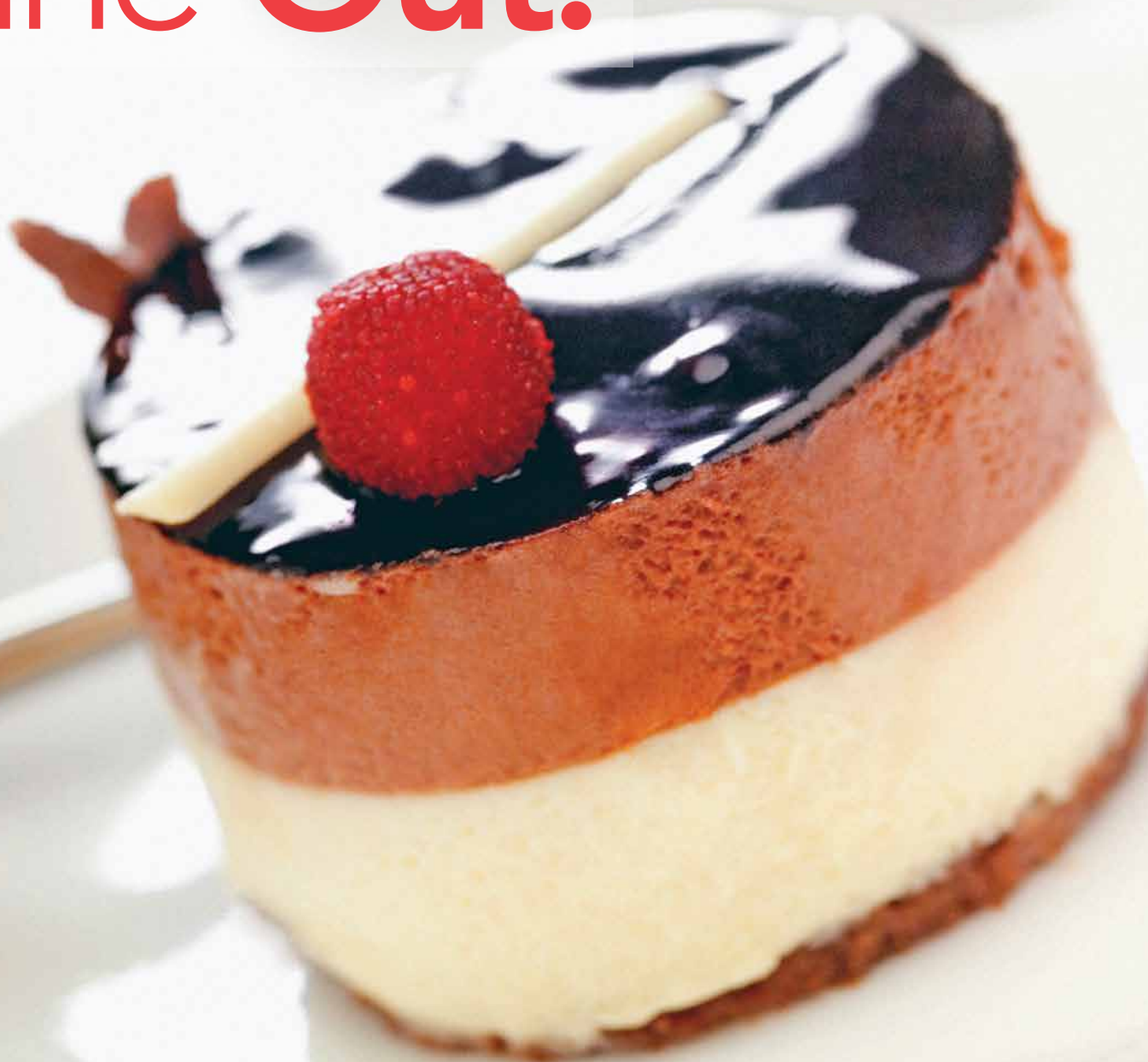


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Restaurant operators end 2022 with mixed outlook

Challenges out of their hands negatively impacting operations according to survey

Last year was a year of uncontrollable pressures for restaurant operators: rising inflation forced supply costs up, made borrowing capital more difficult, and forced them to raise menu prices.

According to the latest National Restaurant Association Business Conditions survey, the trifecta of higher food costs, labor costs and energy/utility costs are now a significant challenge for a majority of operations.

“The restaurant industry is ending the year in an environment that’s the most typical since 2019,” said Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of Research for the National Restaurant Association. “Moderate but positive employment growth across the economy and elevated consumer spending in restaurants will allow the restaurant industry to kick off 2023 on a more optimistic note than the last few years, but operators remain braced for potential challenges in the new year.”

SURGING COSTS ARE A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE

Food and labor costs are the two most significant line items for a restaurant, each accounting for approximately 33 cents of every dollar in sales. Other expenses – such as utilities, occupancy, supplies, general/administrative and repairs/maintenance – combine to represent about 29% of sales. A strong majority of operators say food, labor and energy/utility costs are currently significant challenges for their restaurant.

- 92% of operators say food costs are a significant challenge;
- 89% of operators say labor costs are a significant challenge; and
- 50% of operators expect to make less profit in 2023.

In November, the Producer Price Index for All Foods – which represents the change in average prices paid to domestic producers for their output – rose for the 18th time in the last 23 months, with 15 of those increases topping 1%. While menu prices also increased 8.5% between November 2021 and November 2022, these increases are lower than grocery store prices which increased 12% over the same period.

“In this kind of economic environment,

typical operators don’t have much margin for error. With major input costs escalating, they can make changes to align with local consumer demand while realigning operations for longer term growth,” said Riehle.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Dine In. Dine Out.

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Most restaurant owners say food, labor and energy/utility costs are significant challenges for their establishments.

TARA LEROY Menu Guide

GETTING A BLAST OF THE SOUTH WITH



Tropical Smoothie

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**
STAFF WRITER

With winter weather finally settling into the area, a cool smoothie may not be the first thing someone thinks of for a snack.

And yet, Tropical Smoothie Café in Delavan, at 1807 Geneva St., Suite G, Delavan, opened to a strong following in early December.

“It has been very, very favorable,” said District Manager Steve Copeland. “A lot of comments we got were, ‘we heard you were coming, we always run into them in Florida, we’re glad that you’re here.’”

“We had about 30 people standing in line when I opened the doors at 7 a.m. (Dec. 10),” he added.

Tropical Smoothie Café has thousands of franchises around the country after starting in Florida in the 1990s. The franchise was founded in 1997, and has continued to grow since.

Now there are more than 1,100 different

locations nationwide, including recently started stores in New Berlin, the west side and University Avenue in Madison and Fitchburg.

Copeland said that by the end of 2023, Tropical Smoothie Café hopes to have 18 sites in southeast Wisconsin – as far north as Mequon, down the lakefront, and west out to Lake Geneva, Janesville and Beloit.

“We’re going to make sure we’re established well, and then start looking north and west,” he explained about the local group, owned by Salem Najjar.

In recent years, smoothies have become a popular treat. Tropical Smoothie Café boasts fresh fruit and fruit juices, as well as fresh vegetables in its smoothies.

Depending on a person’s tastes, there is the Red Sangria Smoothie – spiced apple and pear blend with blueberries, kiwi, pomegranate, white grape juice, orange juice and non-fat yogurt – or a simple Jetty Punch, with strawberries and banana.

For those looking for a blast of caffeine

in their smoothie, there’s Mocha Madness – a mix of chocolate, coffee, Cappuccino and non-fat yogurt.

Only a handful of the smoothies use the non-fat yogurt, though, which means the rest are ice, juice, fruits and vegetables.

“We’re a little bit more friendly to those lactose intolerant,” Copeland explained.

Supplements can be added to the various smoothies, including collagen, multivitamins, protein powder and more. Customers can also add raw almond, fresh ginger, chia seeds, ground flaxseed and a spinach and kale supermix.

Smoothies are made with Turbinado, a non-refined raw sugar, and even how much of that goes in a smoothie can be controlled.

“I think it’s just the lifestyle,” Copeland said. “It’s something they can grab, it’s something refreshing, it can quench a thirst, and it’s not something that’s going to lay heavy on you.”

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Tropical Smoothie Café, at 1807 Geneva St., Suite G, in Delavan, has opened to numerous customers wanting to try out the wide variety of smoothies as well as a lunch and dinner menu.

Historic Wagon Wheel reopens in Delavan

Owner wants to return it to a supper club

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**

STAFF WRITER

For more than 10 years, the Wagon Wheel, at 2891 Highway O in Delavan, had sat vacant.

New owner Kevin Hibl set out to change that earlier this year.

“I was involved because of the history of the place,” said Hibl, who opened the bar portion of the business again in June. “I just felt it was important to revitalize this property.”

Now known as the H&H Wagon Wheel, the establishment is open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. weekdays and until 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

The Wagon Wheel has quite the local history. Local files show that it started as a one-room schoolhouse built in 1837, The Delavan Territorial School. It maintained that function until about 1923 – and now forms the main part of the restaurant and bar.

Owned by the Applegate family, someone made a suggestion at the end of Prohibition to turn it into a tavern. The bar remains hand-built with imported logs, and over the years, the site has served as a tavern and a supper club, but had closed in 2010.

Hibl said he originally intended to move his real estate office to the property and maintain the supper club. Right now, he’s dedicated to getting the supper club up and running.

“It’s actually in nice proximity to a lot of community,” “Since I’ve started, they’ve all said they want this to revitalize and open. I’ve had a lot of positive feedback.”

He said he wanted to return the site to a supper Club venue. That includes traditional Friday fish fry, soup of the day and specials – and of course, Brandy Old Fashioneds. Ribs and prime rib will also eventually be on the menu.



top: Kevin Hibl is the new owner of the Wagon Wheel, now known at the H&H Wagon Wheel. The former bar and supper club had sat vacant until this summer, when Hibl reopened the lounge portion of the building. **above:** H&H Wagon Wheel is at 2891 Highway O in Delavan.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Menu Guide*

Hibl is working on the property with his son, Patrick, and the two are working to expand the space and the menu.

“We had a perch fry, our first one, Friday night (Nov. 4),” Hibl said. “The shrimp basket has gone over really well.”

Other items include a full appetizer menu – including chicken tenders, mozzarella sticks and cheese curds – as well as sandwiches. More, Hibl said, will

be coming as the kitchen ramps up.

While the bar was open in June, it wasn’t until the last month that the restaurant got clearance from state inspectors to open.

Hibl made several renovations, including all-new windows, updated electrical, furnace and air conditioning and new flooring.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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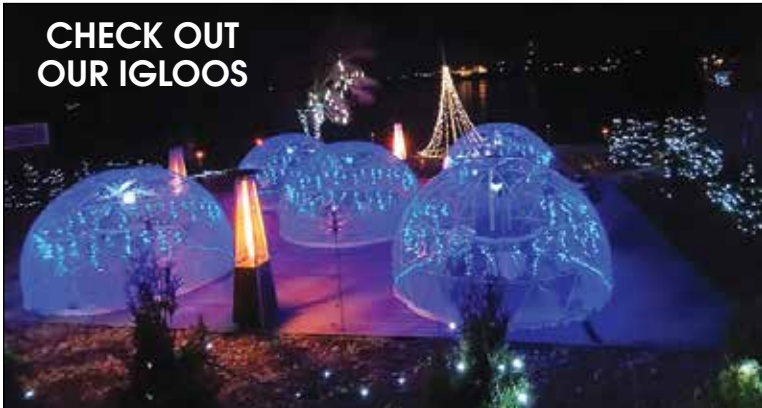
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Hansen's expanding ice cream shop

At Hansen's Ice Cream Parlor in Burlington, some customers come for the delicious Cedar Crest Ice Cream while others crave diverse popcorn flavors, or even come for both during their visit.

By **Jason Arndt**

STAFF WRITER

But by Christmas, owners Kelly and Adam Hansen hope to offer customers other options on the second floor, where they plan to unveil a candy store filled with childhood favorites as well as cotton candy.

"It is going to be what we call a penny candy store, but they won't be a penny," Kelly chuckled. "It will be like a nostalgia candy store."

Nostalgia candy includes Necco Wafers, candy buttons, among others, Kelly said.

In addition to candy and cotton candy, the Hansens plan to have their merchandise on the second floor.

"Then we are going to make cotton candy up here, all of our merchandise will be up here, sweatshirts, t-shirts, our color changing cups," Kelly said.

The second floor renovations have been a vision for the Hansens since they opened the store at 129 E. Chestnut Street in January 2021.

The Hansens initially planned to open both floors at the same time, however, they incurred construction delays while working to find a new location for its first store in Wilmot last year.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Owners Kelly and Adam Hansen, of Hansen's Ice Cream Parlor - Burlington, continues to expand its footprint and product offerings and plans to unveil more on the second floor of their Chestnut Street loop building by the end of the year.

JASON ARNDT *Menu Guide*



Kravings is on a rapid growth path

Specialty ice cream drinks develop loyal followers

With multiple milk shake offerings, ice cream dishes, coffee and

specialty items available, as well as more on the way, Kravings looks to literally satisfy anybody's craving.

Jordan Karweik, owner and chief executive officer of Kravings Premium Beverages, noted Krazy Shakes serves as his company's main specialty while offering other options for customers.

"We have our Krazy Shakes, then just regular ice cream dishes, cones, and then we have coffee as well. So we can do coffee, lattes, cappuccinos,

By **Jason Arndt**

STAFF WRITER

things like that," he said. "For us, our main thing is our Krazy Shakes."

At Kravings, which has locations in downtown Waterford and Burlington as well as another in Mt. Pleasant, Karweik said his company has a simple mission.

"What is the Kraving that you have? What do you like? That is what we are looking to satisfy, and for us, we are going to be offering brats and hot dogs and then we are going to be doing hot ham on Sundays, so that is going to be rolling out in the next couple of weeks."

Kravings, according to its website, sells Cedar Crest Ice Cream in multiple flavors, allows customers to tailor a custom shake creation, and specialty items such as craft sides and hot sauces.

KRAZY NICHE

Karweik, who previously owned an insurance agency, began exploring Krazy Shakes after watching a YouTube clip of somebody visiting New York.

In the YouTube clip, the person experienced a crazy shake, which piqued his interest.

"I saw that and thought it was pretty cool," said Karweik.

Upon discovery of the clip, he sought something similar in southeast Wisconsin, but couldn't find any establishments.

"Unfortunately, I could not find anything like that around here," he said. "It just kind of jumpstarted the idea to have something like that in the area."

Kravings offers seven different Krazy Shakes, however, two specific

above: Kravings Premium Beverages, Waterford, opened its doors in late January to a waiting public during the grand opening event. The shop features a selection of shakes topped with M&Ms, Reece's Pieces, Peanut Butter Cups, whipped cream, Oreo Cookie crumble, cookies, doughnut, cake balls and more. **opposite:** Aside from shakes, Kravings also offers a selection of doughnuts, ice cream, coffee and craft sodas. Owner Jordan Karwik has opened two more Kravings locations this year in Burlington and Mount Pleasant.

CHAD HENSIK Menu Guide



flavors have been the most popular among customers.

According to Karweik, Royal Reeses and Mint-o-Brownie continues to draw interest, with Royal Reeses featuring peanut butter cup ice cream, Reeses Pieces, Reeses Chopped Cups and whipped cream.

“Then there is the Mint-O-Brownie. That one is probably my favorite. It has mint ice cream with Oreo on the rim, whipped cream, and then there is a brownie along with more Oreo with chocolate syrup on top,” said Karweik.

INITIAL LAUNCH, AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION

Born and raised in Waterford, Karweik decided to launch the establishment with business partner Mike Ottelien in his hometown at 202 E. Main St., Waterford.

Although the business opened on Jan. 29, when the area saw below freezing temperatures, Karweik recalled seeing an influx of customers waiting to experience Kravings for the first time.

“It was 25 degrees that day and we had lines all the way down the block,” he said. “It was crazy that day.”

Since then, Kravings has quickly expanded to Mt. Pleasant, 5509 Durand Avenue, Unit D, and Burlington, 344 N. Pine Street with plans to add a fourth location in the Village of Caledonia in the beginning of 2023.

Kravings in both Mt. Pleasant and Burlington is for multiple reasons, according to Karweik, who said the quick expansion is part of his company’s long-term plan.

“While I grew up in Waterford and lived in Waterford nearly my entire life, my business partner and I both actually live out in Mt. Pleasant,” he said. “We wanted to try one out near a denser population and see what that would be like. We were able to do that there. It has shown a lot of success out there because of the population and lack of ice cream shops.”

As for Burlington, many local customers voiced support from bringing Kravings closer to home, according to Karweik.

While the Caledonia location is under construction, with plans to open around January 2023, Karweik has bigger plans for Kravings Premium Beverages.

“After that, our plans are to go

towards Kenosha and northern Illinois. If you are looking 10 years down the road, we are looking at having them all across the country. That is kind of what the goal is.”

MEETING CHALLENGES

In the economic climate, notably workforce shortages, Karweik and Ottelien have worked diligently to recruit and retain employees.

Kravings Premium Beverages, according to Karweik, currently has about 50 employees.

Karweik said he offers competitive wages, and promotes a healthy environment for employees, which has played a key role in continued growth.

In Mt. Pleasant, where Kravings has a manager vacancy, Karweik said he has seen an influx of applicants interested in the position.

“I put that ad out there two days ago and we have already had eight people apply,” Karweik said on Oct. 27. “I have people applying every single day – even to serve as a team member.”

For more information, including hours of operation at all three locations, visit kravingswi.com or on Facebook.

Local breweries

PROVIDE A TASTE OF HOME

While there are many craft brewing companies to be found in Wisconsin, there are few that have as interesting a history or location as Duesterbeck's Brewing Company

The brewery is located on the Duesterbeck family farm, Highway O near Elkhorn.

The Duesterbeck Farm is 150 years old and has been in the family for five generations. According to the family, over the past years the farm had started to deteriorate and the family was looking for a way to restore it so that the farm can continue for future generations.

Laura Duesterbeck Johnson and her husband Ben Johnson came up with the perfect plan to restore the farm and hopefully eventually transition it back to an agribusiness. The plan was beer, handcrafted Wisconsin inspired beers, created by brew master Ben Johnson. As owners of Duesterbeck's Brewing Company, the Johnsons work together, Laura as the creative visionary for the project, and Ben, as the brew master.

For Ben Johnson, opening the brewery was a dream come true. Since 2001, brewing craft beer has been a hobby for Johnson. Over the years, he has perfected his beer recipes while he has dreamt of producing his beers commercially. Now his beer production has become a reality offering his small batch, handcrafted beers to the public. The beer is known for its great flavor and he offers a variety of flavors, which change throughout the season.

EAST TROY BREWERY

Ann and Ted Zess, of East Troy, bought the former FirstMerit Bank building at 2905 Main St. and began renovating the space in the summer of 2017. The East Troy Brewery opened just after Christmas in 2018.

Ann said they chose the Village Square for a number of reasons, including repurposing the vacant bank building, which had sat empty for a couple of years.

"It's such a great building and we always knew it could become an attraction if it was used properly," she said.

The brewery's menu includes appetizers such as their signature beer-battered, deep-fried cheese curds, Hometown Sausage Kitchen bacon wrapped dates, crispy duck wings and Charcuterie boards with house-



Bernard Petersen checks on a batch of his craft beer that he brews at his The Runaway Micropub and Nanobrewery in downtown Burlington.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Menu Guide



The bar at Duesterbeck Brewery is housed in a modern barn that fits in with the farming history of the property.

FILE PHOTO Menu Guide

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Lake Lawn Resort launches new restaurant

The completely remodeled dining room at Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan is open after a \$1.5 million revitalization of both the space and the menu.

Renamed “1878 on the Lake,” the restaurant pays tribute to the resort’s history, which opened as a 50-person boarding house in 1878. Today, the brand new restaurant brings together the best of the classic and the modern, highlighting the spectacular views of Delavan Lake and providing a new dining option for the area, a news release stated.

“We designed a dining experience to bring out the best of our amazing location on the lake as well as shine a spotlight on the creativity and skill of executive chef John Billings,” Lake Lawn General Manager Dave Sekeres said. “We kept our guests and the Lake Geneva community top-of-mind during the planning process, with a focus on creating a premier local dining spot that would be perfect for a special night out or a destination for family and friends.”

THE MENU

Award-winning Chef Billings has created a menu of small plates, sides and timeless main courses with surprising and rich flavor combinations, including house-made cured meats and locally sourced produce. Dishes include shared plates such as braised chuck ravioli with butternut squash, maple puree, and chili lime-radish slaw, and maple-bacon lollipops with house-cured bacon, basswood, saffras and honey.

Dishes that honor the hotel’s Wisconsin roots include beer-cheese soup, made with Pabst Blue Ribbon craft beer, Kiel Wisconsin cheese and white-cheddar popcorn.

Main courses include an Angus filet served with vichy baby carrots and braised ramps, accompanied by a garlic russet mash with espresso port demi. The ribeye roll with a pinot grigio, Worcestershire and butter sauce paired with a side of Cholula leek frites is sure to be a new favorite, and the Faroe Island salmon, is a maple-seared salmon served with shiitake risotto, chili lemon curd, maple drizzle, and sweet beet frites.

Three house-made burgers include a cheddar maple-cured bacon burger, made of a house grind of beef chuck and brisket with house-cured bacon, Wisconsin cheddar, lemon oil arugula salad, and fried egg on a sweet egg yolk bun, a garlic bagel burger, topped with 1878’s 14-day house-cured Angus brisket, German-style sauerkraut, gruyere, and house made 1,000 island dressing, and finally, a meatloaf burger, crafted with onion, green pepper, garlic, Worcestershire, whisky ketchup, napa cabbage and honey mustard slaw.

BAR AND COCKTAILS

In addition to an extensive wine list, the 1878 bar includes a rotating menu of international and local bottled beers as well as creative cocktails such as:

An update to the classic Wisconsin old fashioned, the filthy brandy old fashioned is a mix of house-made Demerara simple syrup, Driftless Glen Brandy from Baraboo,

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Lake Lawn Resort’s new restaurant, 1878 on the Lake, features spectacular views of Delavan Lake. The restaurant celebrates the resort’s history.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Menu Guide

Wisconsin, filthy cherries, a fresh orange slice and a splash of lemon-lime soda.

The cucumber mule is a combination of Driftless Glen Cucumber Vodka, house-made simple syrup, fresh cucumber, lime, and ginger beer.

The smoked cherry is made from Woodford Reserve Bourbon, honey brandy, Campari, house-made sage simple syrup, fresh lemon juice, filthy cherry and finished with smoked cherrywood

glass, artwork, and stonework complete the fresh look and feel.

Communal spaces have also been re-thought and refreshed, including the 1878 Lounge which features a rebuilt art-deco bar and a mesmerizing kinetic sand art table by Sisyphus. The Fireside Lounge, a historic gathering area for generations of families, has also been updated with a newly built fireplace, carpet, furniture and lighting. The Delavan Room has been refreshed, which provides diners with an intimate private room for small parties and events, and boasts amazing lake views.

In addition to 1878 on the Lake, other dining options at Lake Lawn Resort include the Lookout Bar and Eatery, available lakeside, and the Isle of Capri Café, a quick-service café serving beverages, sandwiches and wood-fired pizzas. As always, the resort offers custom catering for both onsite and offsite events.

For more information, visit www.lakelawnresort.com or call 800-338-LAKE (5253).

THE DESIGN

Created to bring the outdoors in while celebrating the original space, the design team brought back the original wood beams and columns of the restaurant and stripped the original wood floors back to their initial state.

To modernize the restaurant, designers chose a palette of blues, grays and creams for a relaxing interior that reflects the lake views, which are now more abundant thanks to a much more open and airier layout. New carpet, furniture, lighting, sound,



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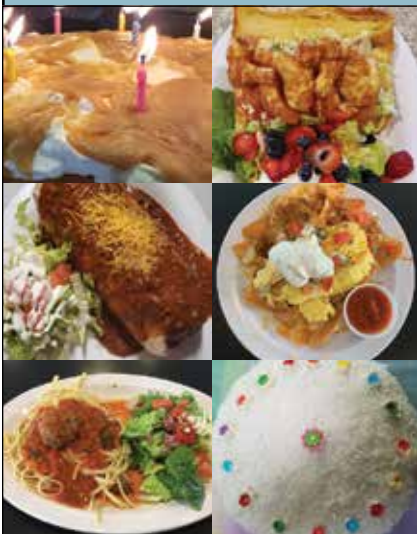


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Looking to be the big dog

FOOD TRUCK FINDS A NICHE IN BURLINGTON

Food trucks have been growing in popularity, both locally and nationally, with some communities holding food truck festivals.

While food truck festivals are commonly held during the summer, when customers often see them scattered in communities, some operations are still running in the winter.

Burlington Demon Dogs, located on Milwaukee Avenue near Rice's Liquor and Echo Lake, is one of the food trucks continuing business.

Amber Selzer, an employee for Burlington Demon Dogs, said she has seen a steady stream of customers.

"Some days are busier than others, but people acclimated to Wisconsin weather definitely do appreciate that the food truck is here," she said. "People still come."

Owner Jason LaBarge began the business in July, offering multiple options to employees at Nestle USA in Burlington,

By **Jason Arndt**

STAFF WRITER



top: Jason LaBarge, owner of Burlington Demon Dogs, helps a customer with an order at his food truck in Burlington. **above:** Burlington Demon Dogs owner Jason LaBarge peaks through the window of his food truck on Friday, Dec. 15.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

JASON ARNDT Menu Guide

HIGHER PRICES, SMALLER MARGINS FORCING CHANGE

Restaurants run on notoriously thin margins, so 50% of operators expect to be less profitable in 2023, while another 34% expect their profitability to remain the same as it was in 2022.

Operators continue to have to make difficult choices to manage their profitability – everything from reducing hours to postponing expansions and even eliminating third-party delivery. Actions taken include:

- 87% of restaurants increased menu prices;
- 59% changed the food and beverage items offered on the menu;
- 48% reduced hours of operation on days open;
- 32% closed on days that normally open;
- 38% of operators say they postponed plans for expansion;
- 13% of operators say they eliminated third-party delivery; and
- 19% postponed plans for new hiring.

LOCAL BREWERIES • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

made meats and local cheeses. For an entrée, guests have their choice of pizza, burger, macaroni and cheese, New York strip steak, Cobb salad or salmon.

The restaurant also has a kids' menu with pizza, burgers, chicken fingers, pasta and macaroni and cheese.

"We're a family friendly place," Ann said. "We have something for everyone and a great, relaxed atmosphere."

The drink menu for the brewpub features seven house-brewed beers on tap along with a wine list and cocktail options. House-made soft drinks are also available.

FOOD TRUCK • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

before finding more opportunities within the community.

LaBarge, whose son wrestles at Burlington High School, found Demon Dogs an ideal name considering the local ties.

"We just thought it would be good, me and neighbors to have a food truck for all of the people by Nestle," he said. "There is not a lot of places to eat (near Nestle). People need something fast and quick there."

Burlington Demon Dogs offer a range food options, including the popular Chicago Dog, Vienna all beef dog, Usinger's sausage, Philly Cheesesteaks, pulled pork sandwiches, Italian beef, among other menu items.

Usinger's flavored sausage include the chorizo, linguica, smoked Cajun andouille, skinless brats, teriyaki and more traditional fare from the Wisconsin-based company.

However, among menu offerings, LaBarge reports the Chicago Dog has been the most sought after item for customers.

OPERATORS PLAN TO HIRE, UNLESS BUSINESS CONDITIONS DETERIORATE

In the last 23 months, restaurants added nearly 2.2 million jobs. That's 400,000 more jobs than the next closest industry – professional and business services – added in the same period, but the industry is still 462,000 below its employment level in February 2020.

According to the survey, a majority of both full-service operators (63%) and limited-service operators (61%) say their restaurant does not have enough employees to meet customer demand.

Operators are actively looking to boost staffing levels, with 87% saying they will likely hire additional employees during the next 6-12 months if there are qualified applicants available. But 79% of operators say their restaurant currently has job openings they are having difficulty filling.

At the same time, restaurant operators will continue to balance staffing needs with business conditions. 57% of operators say

they would be likely to lay off employees during the next 6 to 12 months if business conditions deteriorate and the U.S. economy enters a recession.

The National Restaurant Association Research Group conducted the new operator survey of 3,000 restaurant operators in November 2022. Find a report of key findings at Restaurant.org. And in February, watch for the 2023 State of the Restaurant Industry report highlighting the latest data forecasting trends critical to the industry's growth and success in the coming year.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which comprises nearly 1 million restaurant and foodservice outlets and a workforce of 14.5 million employees.

For more information, visit Restaurant.org and find @WeRRestaurants on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

RUNAWAY MICROPUB AND NANOBREWERY

Bernard Petersen, who co-owns the Runaway Micropub and Nanobrewery with wife, Michele, and launched his mission to open a microbrewery in 2019.

The Petersens, who own MPC Property Management, decided to use one of their properties at 109 E. Chestnut St., Burlington for the brewery.

The property, which is in the historic Chestnut Street loop, consists of an 800-square-foot basement and 1,000-square-foot main floor.

The basement houses the brewing equipment while the taproom is on the main floor.

Petersen said it is considered a nano brewery because his establishment produces less than three barrels per batch.

Peterson, who is the brewmaster cranks out a wide variety of beers on an ever-changing basis.

The Petersens have become well known in the community for the many events hosted by the brewery in the Chestnut Street Loop.

community."

LaBarge, who called Burlington Demon Dogs a family business, said the establishment offers services such as DoorDash and curbside for customers looking to avoid the cold weather.

"I think I am going to continue to do DoorDash and curbside pickup," he said. "You can call my phone and I can bring them the food. They won't have to leave the car."

LaBarge said he plans to stay in business during the winter months to bolster Burlington Demon Dogs exposure in the community.

By the summer and spring, he hopes to see the establishment take off, with more customers seeking the popular Chicago Dog and other offerings.

"I am trying to make an impression here by staying here during the winter," he said. "So, come summer and spring, hopefully it will take off and everybody will enjoy the food."

TROPICAL SMOOTHIE • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Tropical Smoothie Café offers more than just its smoothies, though. A large variety of flatbreads, wraps, quesadillas, sandwiches and salads are all available, again featured fresh vegetables. Right now, Copeland said his favorite is the Buffalo Chicken Wrap, which is “a little on the spicy side” and one of the top sellers in the store’s opening week.

But there are also vegetarian options,

like the hummus veggie wrap. There is a breakfast menu including an All-American wrap of eggs, bacon, cheddar and mozzarella, as well as a peanut banana crunch flatbread and a southwest wrap.

Copeland said the business appears to be a welcome addition to the community, and added that he is looking forward to offering catering programs for lunches

and dinners and taking part in area fundraisers and events.

“We’re just happy to be here,” Copeland said. “We couldn’t wait to be open.”

Tropical Smoothie Café is open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call 262-749-5249.

WAGON WHEEL • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

“I tried to leave the 100-year-old rooms the same,” he said, adding he did the same with the original 1837 building. He also did extensive refurbishing of equipment, and a second bar in the second dining room – and made the restaurant fully ADA accessible.

So far, the response has been positive. The first 120 days was just the lounge being open, but since the kitchen was opened three weeks ago, the buzz has continued to build.

“I’ve had numerous people come in and say there were here in the past, with family members,” Hibl said. “They’re very excited for the reopening and looking forward to the updated menu.”

The main dining room at the H&H Wagon Wheel, shown here decorated for a Halloween Party, was originally a one-room schoolhouse built in the 1800s.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Menu Guide*



HANSEN'S • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

“Just like every normal construction timeline, it doesn’t always happen, but we really wanted to open downstairs and that is what we did,” Kelly said. “In the meantime, we ended up having to move our Wilmot location.”

EARLY BEGINNINGS

Hansen’s Ice Cream Parlor originated on Fox River Road in Wilmot five years ago, opening as a simple ice cream store, offering Cedar Crest Ice Cream.

“When we started out, we wanted do one thing really well, which was ice cream and I feel like we knocked that out of the park,” said Kelly. “We did really well in Wilmot.”

Considering the Wilmot location drew thousands of followers on social media, the Hansens felt comfortable enough to expand, according to Kelly and Adam.

During discussions with their ice cream supplier, Kelly learned of a new venture with a popcorn distributor, but discovered the Wilmot location was too small.

In January 2021, Adam and Kelly took over the former Shy Violet store, where they began offering ice cream, popcorn

and continued to expand menu options for customers.

“We wanted to do something, I wanted to work for myself, I still have a full-time job, but I want to transition into this full-time,” Adam said. “But basically, we just took a chance, we didn’t know where it was going to go.”

“Now, here we are and we are excited. We just keep expanding.”

The Hansens, meanwhile, reopened their Wilmot location at 30807 114th Street.

MORE OPTIONS

Hansen’s Ice Cream Parlor, meanwhile, launched an online store on Black Friday for customers looking to purchase popcorn for shipment to their friends and family members.

Customers, much like the brick and mortar store in Burlington, will be able to purchase the same favorite popcorn flavors ranging from savory, sweet, seasonal and simply sweet through its website at hansensicecreamparlor.com.

Each order, regardless of how much is purchased, includes \$3 flat rate shipping,

SEASONAL PROMOTIONS

Along with an online store, Hansen’s continues to offer holiday promotions and seasonal flavors including reindeer chow popcorn.

Reindeer chow popcorn features a chocolate and peanut butter coating dusted with powdered sugar.

The limited time flavor, according to Kelly, has become so popular they ran out in two days.

However, they have since replenished the newly popular flavor, Adam reported.

During the holidays, Hansen’s Ice Cream Parlor has items ranging from festive small tins, small holiday bags, and small holiday buckets filled with its gourmet popcorn in a variety of flavors such as reindeer chow, cheddar, Christmas mix, peppermint and more.

For more information, including hours, visit Hansen’s Ice Cream Parlor on Facebook or call 262-661-4890.

The Hansens operate Burlington year-round while Wilmot is open on a seasonal basis.

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