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New Village Supper Club opening

Owners want to honor old traditions in updated venue

By **Michael S. Hoey** • CORRESPONDENT

The Village Supper Club in Delavan was scheduled to re-open by late January. After a yearlong delay, new owners Allan and Loretta Kaplan said earlier that month they were excited the long journey was almost complete.

“We would love to get going,” Loretta said. “It all started out as a very nebulous idea. Now that it’s coming to fruition, it’s like, wow, it’s really happening.”

The Kaplans purchased the restaurant in September of 2021 after Chris and David Marsicano decided to retire from the business. The original plan was to renovate the existing building, but after much advice from people they were working with, it was determined tearing down and rebuilding would be a better option.

Allan said the original restaurant began its life as a residential home and had several additions over 100-plus years in every direction. The Kaplans said they had no idea the original home even existed until they purchased the building and discovered remnants of it – including a huge safe on the second floor and a child’s room with cowboy and Indian wallpaper. There was even a tree in the basement and several different fuse boxes throughout the structure.

Once the decision to rebuild was made, the original building was torn down. Ground was broken for the new building in May of last year. Other delays related to zoning permits, the requirement to add a cistern to supply a sprinkler system, and the decision to utilize part of the original foundation caused further delays. Allan said they originally planned on opening a year ago.

The Kaplans said the Town of Delavan was very cooperative and the neighbors have been very supportive. Allan said his

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above: After a yearlong delay, The Village Supper Club on the south shore of Delavan Lake was set to re-open in late January.

MIKE HOEY Dining Guide



• CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

architectural firm, DMAC out of Evanston, Illinois, and construction company, CCI Construction out of Beloit, were great at working out the problems.

"These guys were fabulous," he said.

Supper club needed

In early January, the new owners were putting the finishing touches on the interior of the building and waiting for the Health Department to inspect it.

The Kaplans live in Chicago but have been coming to Delavan for over 25 years on weekends. They own a place just a few doors down from the restaurant and often visited it under the ownership of the Marsicanos.

They have no prior experience in the restaurant business. Allan is in the insurance business in Chicago. He said they bought the restaurant because it needed to be done.

"The reason that the restaurant is here is Delavan needed a supper club," Allan said.

Allan said the area had one in the Village and used to have another at the Delavan Lake Resort, but that one closed and converted to condominiums.

"When this came on the market, we looked at each other and said we didn't want any more condos on the lake," Allan said.

"I think people took this place for granted," Loretta said. "It's such a little gem and I think it was underappreciated."

Even though the Kaplans have no previous experience running a restaurant, they say they are doing it right. Their restaurant supplier, Edward Don and Company, has a restaurant designer, Drew Madden, who designed the kitchen and bar. The Kaplans hired a general manager with 30 years of experience and a chef with a dozen years of experience.

They will also benefit from the carryover of the previous reputation of the Village. They have incorporated several elements of the former building into the new one like wooden beams and paneling. The sign that used to hang outside is now displayed in the entryway and there will be a display case near the entrance where Patti Marsicano will place items that chronicle the history of the Village Supper Club.

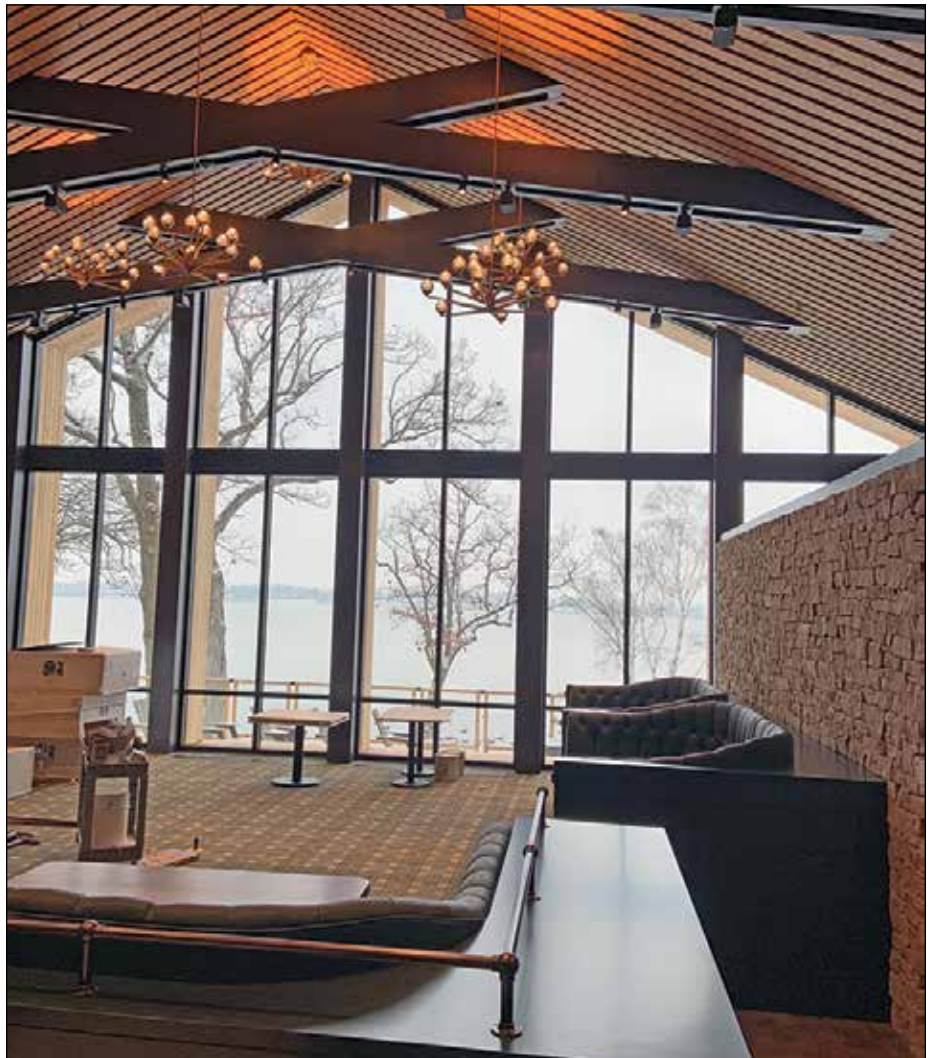
Along with the name "Village Supper Club", the Marsicanos gave the Kaplans their recipes, some of which will be on the new menu.

Serving the community

The new Village Supper Club will continue to be a traditional Wisconsin supper club that also features some modern updates.

"We want to honor the old traditions with an updated supper club," Loretta said.

The Kaplans planned on starting with a



Large windows allow for a stunning view of the lake throughout the rebuilt supper club.

MIKE HOEY Dining Guide

smaller menu that may expand down the road. While the Italian dishes of the Marsicanos will not make the new menu, the new owners planned to offer a fish fry, prime rib and other carryovers. The fish fry, including a traditional relish tray, will have the option of cod as well as blue gill and perch.

"We will continue the tradition of a family-friendly community restaurant," Allan said. "We are not a sports bar, we are not a steakhouse."

"We want to have a variety on the menu so people are not priced out of it," Loretta said.

"We want to serve the whole community," Allan added. "We will have a wide spectrum on the menu in terms of pricing."

Allan said if people want to splurge for a birthday or some other event, there will be options for that. But they also plan to have affordable options people can enjoy that will also be high quality.

The new building offers a tremendous view of the lake. The topography of the site

slopes toward the lake, so the interior of the building has a terraced effect, meaning any table inside offers a great view.

"We want people to come in and immediately see the lake," Allan said.

There is a large bar and seating area with a fireplace, a private dining room for small celebrations, and two outdoor decks. One deck is for cocktails and has three fire pits. The other is for outdoor dining and includes a fireplace and full bar. The Kaplans also plan to expand the dock area so people can pull in with their boats and enter the restaurant from the lake.

"We are trying to use local vendors as much as we can," Allan said.

The seating capacity will be similar to the old building at 180 to 220 if you include the outdoor areas. The Kaplans expect to employ up to 25 people during the summer months.

"The big takeaway is that we are not restaurateurs," Allan said. "We just wanted to make sure there was a supper club here on Delavan Lake."



Waterford Stillhouse owner Tammie Begotka (left) and employee Gaye Otto showcase some of the establishment's latest offerings, including the popular bourbon caramel sauce, which has drawn positive feedback from customers.

JASON ARNDT
Dining Guide

Waterford Stillhouse adds saucy addition

*Establishment's
bourbon caramel sauce
draws rave reviews*

By **Jason Arndt** • STAFF WRITER

Waterford Stillhouse already had the distinct and unique honor of being the first and only legal distillery in Racine County since the Prohibition Era.

The establishment, located on Main Street in the heart of downtown Waterford, has been in operation since 2021 and produces spirits, premium vodka, bourbon, light whiskey, lemon vodka, a line of several syrups in small batches on site.

Most recently, Waterford Stillhouse introduced a new item – bourbon caramel sauce – and it has drawn rave reviews from customers and even a large retail outlet.

“We’ve had a major grocery chain that actually expressed interest that they want to carry it in their grocery store,” said Waterford

Stillhouse owner Tammie Begotka, who runs the business with her husband and head distiller Brandon.

She credited employee Gaye Gotto, who Begotka said has also been instrumental in producing honey simple syrup and jalapeño simple syrup, both of which serve as an ideal addition to any cocktail, baked recipes and tea.

Gotto, who took the necessary classes through the state of Wisconsin, said she developed bourbon caramel sauce almost by

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

accident while at home.

“We started with the syrups and that went over well. I was messing around at home and making caramel sauce and I thought, ‘Let’s put bourbon in here. That would be good,’” Gotto recalled.

“I tried it at home and ran in to (Tammie’s) house and she liked it, so we decided to give it a try,” she added.

Tammie said other employees sampled the product and also delivered positive feedback.

Sweet approval

After a few months of approvals, including one from the Department of Agriculture, bourbon caramel sauce became available for sale at Waterford Stillhouse.

Since then, the newest addition has been high in demand, Begotka said.

“(Gaye) has been coming in several times a week to make it, because we make them in small batches, which is really unique to distillery,” Begotka said. “Many distilleries that are selling products other than spirits outsource those products, whereas, we are making them right here in our production facility.”

Gotto said she uses the bourbon Waterford Stillhouse has already distilled, which makes producing the caramel bourbon sauce much easier however she focuses on small batches because it mitigates some issues.

“It’s a fairly easy thing to make here, but it is very temperamental. You have to be careful with the sugar so that it doesn’t burn,” said Gotto.

“I prefer to do it in much smaller batches because it’s less likely to burn. If I do burn it, I am not losing as many ingredients,” she explained.

While the latest item includes alcohol, most of the alcoholic content has diminished through production methods, which makes the product safe for consumption by anyone.

“The alcohol content is minimal per batch,” Gotto said. “Whenever you add alcohol to any recipe, the actual alcohol gets burnt out, so there is no concern with alcohol. The people who don’t drink should have no concerns.”

She said some customers have reportedly used the bourbon caramel sauce to drizzle on waffles.

Gotto said the shelf life for an opened bourbon caramel sauce is about two years.

“Once it’s opened, we do recommend refrigerating it,” she said.

Worth the wait

The Begotkas envisioned opening a micro distillery in 2018, according to its website.

After about two years of planning, the distillery received its state and federal

licenses to begin operations in 2020, but the owners’ original plans were placed on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, while the distillery was under construction, the Begotkas made hand sanitizer to serve the community before the original plans came to fruition with an opening in July 2021.

“We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from our community and our visitors,” the website states.

“And we’re not done. We have been blessed with an incredible team, who we affectionately call The Stillhouse Family, and they are ready to serve you,” it states.

Begotka said Waterford Stillhouse only uses natural ingredients without any preservatives.

The business has a tasting room and has items available for customers looking to bring the establishment’s products home.

Additionally, there is an online store, which features a variety of products, including apparel.

Under the business’ federal and state licenses, the establishment can only serve products made on site, according to Tammie.

Waterford Stillhouse is at 228 E. Main St., Waterford. For more information, visit waterfordstillhouse.com and follow them on Facebook.

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More than COFFEE

*Area native
returns home to
build a business*

By Jason Arndt • STAFF WRITER

Infinity Coffee and Beyond is more than a place for customers looking for their morning cup of Joe.

Nestled in the Chestnut Street loop in downtown Burlington, where businesses come together for community activities on a regular basis, Infinity Coffee



features locally sourced specialty coffee, a lunch menu, monthly specials, and bakery items created to satisfy every preference.

Valerie Kowalski, who was born and raised in the Waterford area, is the mastermind behind the business.

While Infinity Coffee and Beyond has quickly established itself in the loop, it has also weathered multiple changes early on.

Returning home

Kowalski, who graduated from Waterford Union High School in 2007, spent more than a decade in the Madison

area before coming back to southeastern Wisconsin.

A culinary artist by trade, she worked as an executive chef for Epic Systems in Verona before opening a catering business in Sauk City.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, many businesses including Kowalski's endured challenges.

"The business was really growing out there and then COVID leveled it," she said.

With limited options, including some financial challenges, Kowalski found

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

top: Valerie Kowalski's business, Infinity Coffee and Beyond in downtown Burlington, offers a variety of food options as well as hot and cold beverages.
above: Customers can select from a variety of menu options at Infinity Coffee, which moved from its former location to the downtown loop.

JASON ARNDT Dining Guide

her way back to the Burlington area and discovered Café B was available for sale.

At the time, Café B was at the corner of Chestnut and Dodge streets, where The Nash and two other businesses now sit.

"I decided to buy the bakery, and as a Hail Mary play, began a new business, and a new start, in a new town," she said.

In 2021, under the ownership of Kowalski, the establishment experienced a rebranding and location change. She opted to name it Infinity Coffee and Beyond, which began as an inside joke amongst friends.

"Infinity Coffee and Beyond is the full name. The beyond is that it's not limited to just coffee and pastries. I can do lunch and I can do whatever I want to do," she said. "The name actually started as a joke at our old location, that we drink endless amounts of coffee, and when we were looking to rebrand, that's just how it came to be."

To the loop

When the business began, Kowalski admits there wasn't much traffic at the former location because it was a little outside the booming downtown area.

"At the time, I was kind of an island down there, so when Hopscotch Cakery closed and this became available, a lot of people emailed me and texted me immediately, telling me I should move to the loop."

Kowalski followed through, and discovered endless possibilities at 133 E. Chestnut Street, including an expanded kitchen and more cohesiveness with

neighboring businesses such as Jacobs Smokehouse, Burlington Menswear, The Runaway Micropub and Nanobrewery, the Loop Commons, and Chic and Unique Consignment and Boutique.

Since then, business has boomed, she said.

"It has picked up quite a bit. The loop has got a lot of festivities and things that draw people out and we get a lot of exposure that way," she said. "In general, it's really accessible, there is parking in the back, people find us as they do with good food."

Coffee and pure food

Infinity Coffee and Beyond offers coffee produced by Burlington Coffee Co. and Collectivo, based in Milwaukee.

The beverage menu consists of mocha, cappuccino, latte, Americano, Chai Latte, Red Eye, Café Au Lait and London Fog.

Additionally, with Kowalski's culinary skills, Infinity Coffee serves chicken salad; chicken, lettuce, tomato, avocado sandwiches; Pesto Caprese melts; tuna melts; chicken and bacon ranch melts, turkey brie, and traditional breakfast favorites.

"Our quiche has been selling along with our sandwiches and soup, so a lot of our lunch items have been gaining a lot of popularity," she said. "Lately, I can't keep danishes, bear claws or turnovers in stock and we do make all of those in house with real butter, so it's a pretty good selling point."

While people stop in for coffee and some breakfast pastries, Kowalski said

she also finds enjoyment in creating lunch dishes, considering her background in culinary arts.

"It's a good thing because I am getting to use my degree in culinary and also use the baking background to incorporate into the place here," she said.

Strong support

Kowalski, who has one other employee, said she has also drawn support from her parents, who still reside in Waterford.

All things considered, she said she's relished having family and friends nearby, which has made returning home worthwhile.

"It is awesome. My parents are 15 minutes up the road. They, along with others, have been an integral part of helping build this business into what it is," she said. "We have got an army of people helping out."

In the future, Kowalski hopes to see continuous growth in the lunch demand, which could spark a possible return to catering events.

"I hope to be at the point where lunch takes off and I would be able to cater again. That would really be a good step," she said. "Catering is something I have a big passion for, so I would like to find my way back to it."

In the meantime, Kowalski said she has found the new business rewarding.

"It's a lot of work, but we love what we do," she said. "We hope to keep expanding and growing as we get busier."

For more information, visit Infinity Coffee and Beyond's Facebook page.



Born and raised in Waterford, Kowalski said her family and friends, among others, have helped her business grow.

JASON ARNDT Dining Guide

More bargains at more locations

Best Bargains expands with store in Elkhorn

By **Jennifer Eisenbart** • STAFF WRITER

For Doug Helnore, owner of Best Bargains, there is a simple philosophy about the food he sells.

“We’re a master redistributor of wholesale goods cross country,” said Helnore, who purchased full ownership of Best Bargains in 2019 after being a partner since 2003.

In November of 2022, Helnore’s Best Bargains opened a new store at 210 S. Pine St., Burlington, in addition to its main store at 6515 352nd Ave., Burlington – technically, though most refer to the store as being in New Munster.

Now, the company will have a store in Elkhorn, which Helnore hoped would be open by the end of January.

The new store is at 3 E. Geneva St., Elkhorn – where the former Pharmacy Station was for years.

Helnore said the site features roughly double the square feet of the newer Burlington store, and appealed to him on many levels.

“One, it had its own parking.

Two, it had its own sign,”

Helnore said. “Three, it had a huge basement.

Four, it’s about double the size of Burlington.

“We’re going to have both restaurant and retail items, more like our New Munster location,” he added.

Helnore explained that Best Bargains operates and offers its deals because they can buy and sell in bulk.

“We will sell to larger distributors by the truckload,” he said. “Along with that, I sell to prison distributors and grocery distributors.

“We have access to so many deals that a lot of retail chains don’t,” he explained, adding that the store also re-boxes and repacks restaurant-quality food.



Best Bargains owner Doug Helnore stands in front of the Burlington outlet store, which opened in November of 2022. Helnore said he hoped to have the Elkhorn store open by the end of January.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Dining Guide



Best Bargains receives oversupplies, then puts them out under its own private labels, selling them to the consumers in smaller, home-sized packages. The same goes for food service oversupply.

The result is lower prices on a larger variety of items – rather like a warehouse club store without any membership fees and is open to the public.

Helnore pointed out there’s a difference between restaurant-quality foods and retail foods.

“What we give people is better quality at a much lower price,” he explained. “It’s not all items, but generally all the items they sell in the grocery store ... will be all the mis-sized stuff.

“Restaurant quality, the bottom line is it’s more of a uniform consistency and size,” Helnore added.

The Burlington outlet store on South Pine Street stocks mostly retail items, but the main Burlington (New Munster) and Elkhorn sites will have both retail and

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

restaurant foods.

That gives people a chance to purchase items like restaurant-quality French fries, choice cuts of meat, unique desserts and various types of seafood as well as offering a deli with a large variety of items.

“Our main goal is buying in quantity at the right time of year and partnerships – close, honest partnerships – with our vendors and customers,” he said.

Helnore explained that the new store has been in the works for more than a year, but it was a matter of finding the right location.

When a business associate purchased the former Pharmacy Station, Helnore said it seemed like a match made in heaven.

“We got a favorable lease,” he said. “Things just came together in the right way.”

Helnore hopes to maintain the same quality of employee service as well, which he said is an important part of the equation.

“It’s a close-knit bunch of people who stay here a long time,” he said, adding that he has about 55-60 employees. “They understand the main goal – take care of the customer and move as many boxes and bags as possible.”

As far as a next potential step, Helnore said he hopes to open a new location, perhaps in Janesville or Whitewater.

The goal, of course, is satisfied customers who are presented an option to stretch their food budget.

“I think they get a better quality at a cheaper price,” Helnore explained.

“And I’m hoping to offer the restaurants and bars in the area the opportunity to buy at a cheaper price, in lower volumes.”

Best Bargains is online at www.bestbargainsinc.com.

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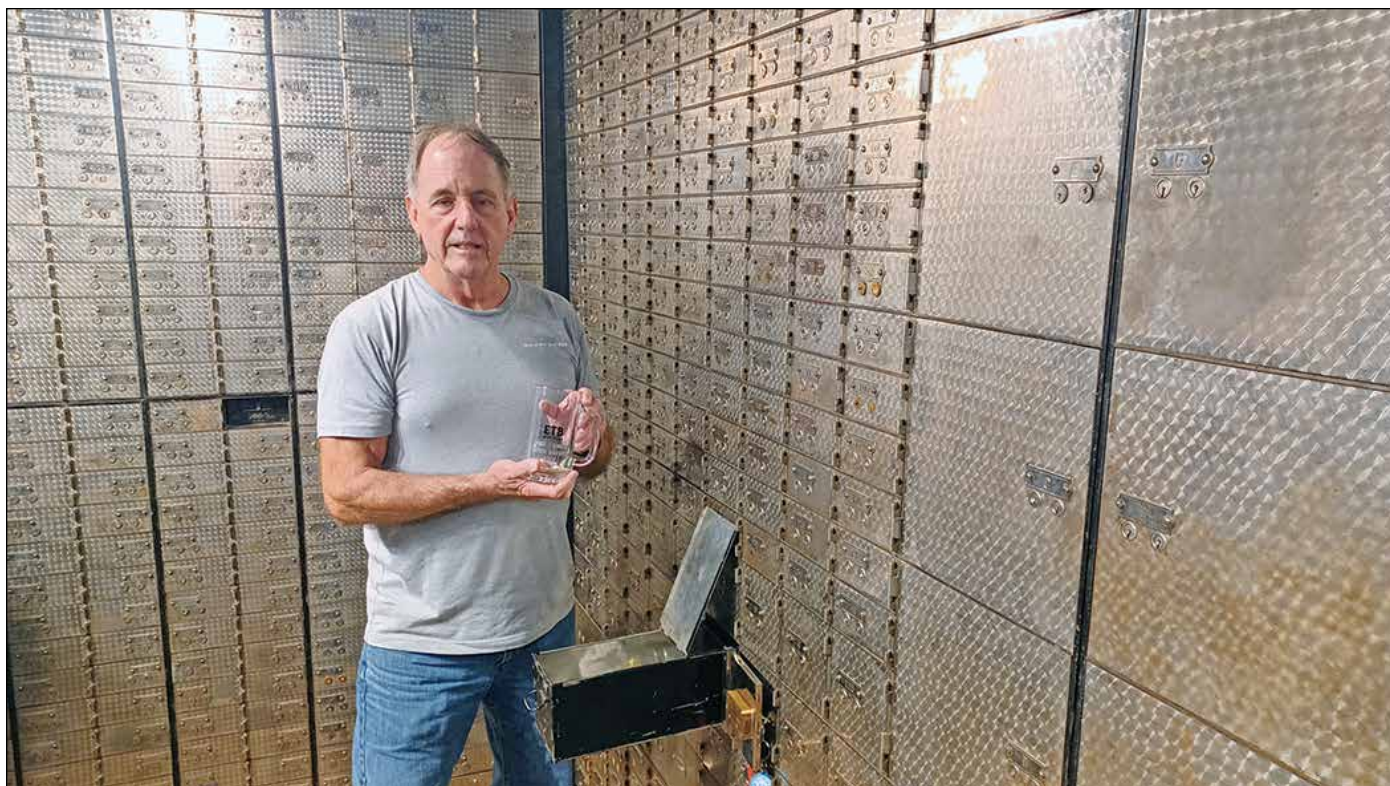
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Keeping the beer fresh at East Troy Brewery



above: Scott Slauson (right) head brewer for East Troy Brewery, and Mike Mondloch, a part time brewer, have produced hundreds of barrels at the brewery. **top:** Mondloch showcases the bank vault inside the East Troy Brewery building that now serves as a place to keep mugs for members of the brewery's mug club.

JASON ARNDT *Dining Guide*

By **Jason Arndt** • STAFF WRITER

East Troy Brewery has been a fixture in the downtown area since its launch in 2018 in the former State Bank of East Troy.

While the structure brings a historical charm, the brewery presents multiple options, including more than a dozen varieties of beer on tap based on season that has attracted customers from the local and regional areas.

Scott Slauson, head brewer at East Troy Brewery, said they have both beer on tap as well as some bottled for customers, all of which are produced on site.

"We brew everything in house," said Slauson, adding that the brewery uses locally sourced ingredients to produce each batch of beer.

"We use all natural ingredients to flavor our beers," he said.

As for the craft beer on tap, East Troy Brewery produces beer in distinct varieties, ranging

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

from Scotch Ales, a Mexican lager drawing inspiration from Day of the Dead, American Pale Ales, an Oktoberfest Marzen blend, hard seltzers, general lagers, IPAs, fruited beers, a Farmhouse Pastoral Ale, an amber bock, among a series of other options.

Slauson said IPAs have been the most popular, as well as Helles of Troy, a type of lager.

“We try to have a well-rounded menu because you never know what people are attracted to,” he said.

“IPAs are hot right now, I think everyone wants to have a couple of different IPAs, and we do that,” Slauson added.

As for the Helles of Troy – which is one of the brewery’s mainstays – the easy-to-drink German-style Helles offers a touch of sweetness that balances a measurable addition of spicy German hop flavor and light bitterness.

“It’s a German lager, it’s a very light beer, but a very flavorful beer,” Slauson said. “It is a crowd pleaser.”

Seasonal favorites

East Troy Brewery rotates its menu with seasonal changes to the craft beer menu, which help them keep options fresh for customers and entices them to keep coming back.

“It’s kind of a seasonal thing that people

look forward to,” Slauson said. “There are special beers for spring, there are special beers for fall.”

In addition to beer options, East Troy Brewery has food made from scratch in the kitchen, according to co-owner Ann Zess.

Zess, who opened East Troy Brewery with her husband, Ted, said the menu includes favorites such as chicken wings, a brisket, multiple salad options, several sandwich varieties, as well as pizza.

“We have a scratch kitchen, so everything is made from scratch,” she said.

East Troy Brewery has an on-site smoker, according to Slauson, who said it’s at the back of the building near the outdoor beer garden.

Community partner

East Troy Brewery often participates in community events, including some presented by the Chamber of Commerce, which included most recently the wine walk in early November.

“We also do a lot of special events, like birthday parties, baby showers, wedding rehearsal dinners,” Zess said.



In addition to hosting events, including private parties, East Troy Brewery hosts its own special events, such as a holiday beer dinner held in December.

The beer dinner – which featured a five-course meal – paired food dishes with a beer based on taste.

Zess said they made it a priority to keep the historic qualities of the former State Bank of East Troy.

Customers can come in and see the former bank vault, where mug club members can access their mugs from safe deposit boxes and see the original teller lines.

Paying mug club members receive special discounts on beverages, Zess said.

She said the historic structure also pays homage to the area it serves.

“We have all the pictures of old East Troy, we try to capture a lot of that as well,” she said. “It is like a mini museum.”

East Troy Brewery, 2905 Main St., East Troy is accessible online at etbrew.com.

For additional information, including how to become a member of the mug club, visit the website or call 262-642-2670.

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Fulfilling a downtown niche

PROVISIONS & CO. OFFERING SPECIALTY ITEMS

By **Jason Arndt** • STAFF WRITER

A provision is defined as a stock of needed materials or supplies, particularly food, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary.

For Patrick Sullivan, owner of the Coffee House at Chestnut and Pine in Burlington, it has a much deeper meaning, for him as well as his wife, Sarah, as they recently unveiled a new complement to their downtown business with the introduction of Provisions & Co.

Provisions & Co., located in seldom-used space inside the Coffee House, offers diverse wine and spirits selections, specialty cheeses and meats, crackers, olive oil, and much more.

The Sullivans decided to create Provisions & Co. to fill a void within its 492 N. Pine Street property and create a niche within the downtown area.

“We have used the space for overflow seating for the Coffee House, but we wanted to have an active storefront or another active storefront,” Sullivan said.

Wanting to use that storefront as motivation, the Sullivans asked themselves two simple questions.

What is there a need for downtown, and how can it complement the Coffee House and Liars Club Bar, which is on the second floor of the property?

“That is where we came up with this concept,” Sullivan said. “It already pays off when we are working with some of our existing vendors for the Coffee House and Liars Club, whether it’s our wine distributors or food vendors.

“That makes the process a little easier because we already have the existing relationships. We just needed to use them in a different way,” he added.

Variety of specialties

Provisions & Co. has products from Hook’s Cheese Company, Inc., of Mineral Point, Cowgirl Creamery from California, Door County Creamery, Carr Valley Cheese Company based in La Valle, Cypress Grove Cheese from California, Boar’s Head, Hammond’s Candies, and several other specialty brands.

Additionally, Sullivan explained, they have hundreds of different wines available for sale.

A soft opening for Provisions & Co. was held in November – when City of Burlington businesses remained open for the annual Light Up the Night celebration downtown – at which time Sarah said they also offer specialty curated items.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Patrick and Sarah Sullivan, of the Coffee House at Chestnut and Pine, unveiled their latest business venture, Provisions & Co., in November.

JASON ARNDT Dining Guide



above: Within the confines of the Coffee House in Burlington is a new venture, Provisions & Co., which features a variety of items chosen by the owners as well and through customer feedback. **below:** The new business offers curated seasonal items while selling a wide selection of wines and spirits as well as specialty meats and cheeses.

JASON ARNDT Dining Guide

PROVISIONS & CO.

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Patrick elaborated on the curated inventory, which he said places a focus on items that the Sullivans use on a routine basis at home.

“It is really things that we enjoy,” Patrick said. “Some of it’s feedback from the community as well.

“We kind of surveyed people when we got this up and running and asked them what they were looking for that they can’t get anywhere else,” he added.

Based on initial feedback, customers have sought out certain cheese brands and a new wine that they enjoyed while dining out at a restaurant, among other items.

“It might be a specific cheese that they love and have to drive 25 minutes to get,” Patrick said. “It could be a great wine that they had at a restaurant, and they can’t find it on store shelves.”

Rolling with the changes

Patrick said the products available will shift on a seasonal basis. Those changes – in addition to taking customer feedback into consideration – will help them expand the inventory.

“It’s just something that is going to continue to evolve,” he said. “We will continue to get feedback from customers and just have fun with it.”

Provisions and Co. will primarily be open during the same hours as the Coffee House.

The Coffee House at Chestnut and Pine, 492 S. Pine St., is open 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. Mondays through Wednesdays, 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, and 7 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Sundays.

The Liars’ Club Bar, which is on the second floor of the building, is open from 5 p.m. until 11 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays.



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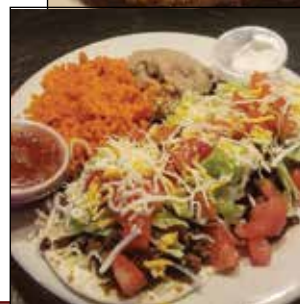
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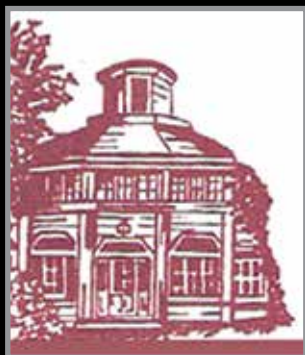
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