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Newspapers publication
Winter 2025

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DINE 'OUTDOORS' IN Igloos & Snow Globes

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

For those living in the Midwest – especially in Wisconsin, known for cold weather and snow – wintertime is not thought of as a time to visit a local restaurant, especially if it is one on the shores of a favorite lake in the area.

But if a favorite restaurant happens to be on the shore of Geneva Lake or Lake Como, eating outdoors in the middle of winter isn't just a possibility – it's reality.

For several years, many of local restaurants have provided snow globes or igloos to add a fun element to a visit to the Lake Geneva area and to prove once again the area is open year-round.

Here are some places to consider.

Geneva National

When thinking of snow globes, most contain winter scenes – a snowman, Santa, a sled or a home. When flipped upside down, the “snow” falls inside the display.

Now it's possible to have a winter snow globe experience in real life, although these snow globes work a bit differently. They are full size and will hold up to eight visitors comfortably.

Walking up to the snow globe on the deck of The Lodge, the human-sized snow globe allows visitors to spend an afternoon or evening enjoying a meal, snack or drink. If those inside are lucky regarding the weather, snow is falling outside while visitors are warm and comfortable.

The snow globes are composed of glass and wood, making them warm inside. They are equipped with two heaters – one on the ceiling and another under the seating bench.

According to Alexandra Lesser, vice president of food and beverage at Geneva National and The Lodge, because of their makeup, the globes tend to retain heat, which isn't a bad thing on a cold winter day.

It's advised to dress for the season. Visitors may not need to keep a coat on

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above: With two heaters, one on the top and one under the seat, visitors to globes at The Lodge stay warm and toasty while enjoying the outdoors.

COURTESY THE LODGE AT GENEVA NATIONAL *Dining Guide*





above: Enjoy the beauty of the outdoors from the inside of a glass and wooden globe at Geneva National. Take in a winter view of Lake Como while sharing snacks with friends.

COURTESY THE LODGE AT GENEVA NATIONAL *Dining Guide*



above: Nighttime and the colored lights add a special festiveness to the Pier 290 igloos.

at right: Make reservations for brunch in an igloo at Pier 290 for Saturday or Sunday at 10 a.m. and receive a complimentary bottle of champagne and some fruit juices for make-your-own mimosas.

COURTESY PIER 290
Dining Guide



while in the globe, but on very cold days or after dark, it may be more comfortable wearing one. A light blanket could also help.

Two globes are at the Clubhouse at Geneva National, while five are available at The Lodge overlooking Lake Como.

Reservations are required for the snow globes, each spanning 90 minutes. There is no charge for the use of the globes but there is a minimum food and beverage charge. Snow globes are available to be reserved from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

“There is a minimum charge of \$100 for food and beverage Sunday through Thursday and \$150 on Friday and Saturday,” Lesser explained.

The Clubhouse and The Lodge each have a different menu of shareable items, such as a charcuterie board, dips and pretzels. The Lodge also has a number of pizzas available. All of the food options are meant to be shared.

The Clubhouse is at 1221 Geneva National Ave. South, Lake Geneva, while The Lodge is at W4240 Highway 50, Lake Geneva. The snow globes will be open until March.

To learn more about the snow globes at the Geneva National Clubhouse and The Lodge go to destinationgn.com/snowglobe.

Mars Resort

Mars Resort has been on the shore of Lake Como, under several names, for over 100 years. They have provided excellent food and custom-made drinks over the years, but in 2018, they added igloos on the deck for winter outdoor spaces.

Igloos are warm plastic globes with heaters inside that allow customers to sit out on the deck and enjoy the view of the lake even during the winter. Lights both on the deck and within the igloo brighten up the space.

“We added the igloos in 2018 and they have remained popular with customers since then,” said Scott Pohl, manager and co-owner of Mars Resort. “The igloos hold six guests comfortably. Each group receives a 90-minute reservation period to enjoy time with friends or family and the beautiful view of Lake Como as the sun sets.”

The igloos are open Friday and Saturday with the first seatings at 4 p.m. Each igloo has three seatings, with reservations spaced out in an effort to better serve customers.

“By spreading out the times, it is easier to provide better service,” Pohl said. “We offer a variety of foods on the igloo menus, many of them are those that our customers enjoy.”

Several of the igloo trays at Mars are large enough to serve up to five people. Choose from dips, a one-and-a-half pound baked pretzel served with melted cheese, skewers of chicken, steak or shrimp and a

variety of other appetizers.

Mars' famous BBQ ribs – with sauce or a dry rub – are also available. A Silvestri Sweets Dessert Platter – an assortment of cake bits, caramels, cookies and chocolate – can be a sweet end to an evening.

There is a minimum charge of \$100 for food and beverage while in the igloo, but again, no rental charge for it. While the igloos are heated, it's recommended guests dress warmly, especially if the weather is cold.

Smoking and vaping are not allowed in igloos, nor are pets.

Mars Resort is at W4098 S. Shore Dr., Lake Geneva. To learn more about the igloos and to make a reservation call 262-245-5689 or visit mars-resort.com.

Pier 290

In the warm weather months, one of the area's popular places to eat at Pier 290 is out on the deck along the lakefront. But just because it's not warm now doesn't mean the beauty of the lake cannot be enjoyed.

Pier 290 offers its igloos lakeside, each able to hold up to six people.

"(They) are perfect for a cozy intimate meal with friends and family," said Alanna Congden, marketing director for Gage Marine, which operates Pier 290. "We begin using the igloos around November and they continue to be used through March, but they are weather dependent."

The igloos are heated by a small space heater in each one, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are very warm. The temperature in the igloo is dependent on the outside temperature and the amount of wind.



Igloos line the deck of Pier 290 where visitors can enjoy a view of Geneva Lake and share lunch, dinner, or weekend brunch with friends or family.

COURTESY PIER 290 Dining Guide

It is recommended igloo guests dress warmly, with as many layers as it takes to stay comfortable. In really cold weather, blankets are also encouraged.

Reservations are necessary for use of the igloos and because of their popularity, they often get booked.

"When you book your igloo experience for lunch, dinner, or weekend brunch, you are able to order off our full menu," Congdon explained. "Each reservation allows the group to enjoy the igloo for 1 hour and 45 minutes."

As a special treat, those who book an

igloo for 10 a.m. on Saturday or Sunday receive a bottle of champagne and carafes of juice to make mimosas to be enjoyed at the lakefront. With an hour and 45 minutes time in the igloo, there is plenty of time to enjoy a meal and time with friends.

There is no minimum charge for food or drink when using igloos but there is a reservation fee of \$45 for lunch and \$75 for a dinner reservation. This fee is paid when paying the dining bill.

Pier 290 is at 5 Liechty Dr., Williams Bay. To reserve an igloo, visit pier290.com/lakeside-igloos.



above right: Enter the igloos at Mars and order your favorite beverage and snacks from the special menu.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ Dining Guide

above left: The beauty of the colored lights of the igloos at the resort add to the ambience.

COURTESY MARS RESORT Dining Guide



Fast facts about slow cooking

Slow cooking is a popular way to prepare meals, especially during the cold, winter months. However, the methods of doing so vary considerably.

Many people may not realize that slow cooking can be a healthy and beneficial way to prepare food.

The following are some advantages to cooking low and slow.

Save money

Cooking foods slowly helps to tenderize them, which bodes well when utilizing more fibrous or dense cuts of meat.

Consumers looking for ways to save more on their monthly food bills can lean on slow cooking to produce delicious results with cheaper cuts.

Reduce the number of dishes

Those who do the majority of their cooking in a slow cooker can mix ingredients that are typically prepared separately.

Putting them together in the crock saves time and energy cleaning up.

Convenience

Slow cooking allows cooks to step away from the kitchen and engage in other activities.

Most slowly cooked foods only require sporadic check-ins while cooking.

Nutrient-dense meals

The United Kingdom-based supplement firm Wild Nutrition notes that because of the low temperatures utilized when slow cooking, the nutrients within foods cooked slowly remain more stable than they do when employing other methods of cooking.

This means slow cooking may deliver more beneficial vitamins and minerals than other methods of preparing meals.

Soften ingredients while cooking

Slow cooking at a low temperature for several hours will soften up tough root vegetables.

Intensify flavor

Cooking over a long period of time can increase flavor, enabling cooks to use less sugar, salt or other ingredients that are often relied on to add more taste.

Slow cooking is a convenient and beneficial way to prepare healthy, nutritious and flavorful meals.

(METRO CREATIVE)



Many people may not realize that slow cooking can be a healthy and beneficial way to prepare food. Additionally, consumers looking for ways to save more on their monthly food bills can lean on slow cooking to produce delicious results with cheaper cuts.

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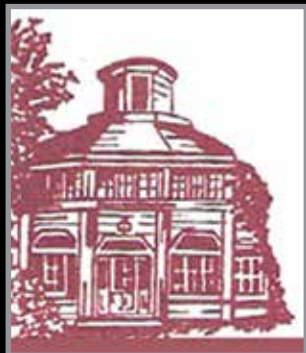
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Bakery owner reflects on past year

Pastries by Chad appreciates neighboring businesses, enjoys continued growth

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**

STAFF WRITER

It's been a year of growing and learning for Chad Visger.

What started off as a small wholesale bakery out of Turtle Lake Tap and Grill has turned into a downtown Elkhorn retail staple, as Visger and his business, Pastries by Chad, have now occupied the former Elkhorn Pastry Shop since August of 2023.

The space of time that has passed has given Visger all sorts of insight.

"Figuring out just the flow of everything," he said. "Normal business problems for a bakery in the first year. Just figuring out what the right decision is next.

"What the right thing is to do, at the right time," he added.

Visger and his wife, Sam Siewrok, officially opened in the fall of 2023.

Since then, the retail space has continued to grow, while Visger continues his wholesale and catering work.

"Wholesale is kind of our bread and butter," Visger said, no pun intended.

He has about 30 accounts that range from restaurants to coffee shops to resorts, keeping them stocked in bread, pastries, buns and a variety of other items.

The retail store, located at 29 N. Wisconsin St. in Elkhorn, crosses over somewhat with the wholesale, in that it offers bread and pastries. But the retail side offers different kinds of bread – like buttercrust and sourdough – as well as a wide variety of donuts, muffins, cinnamon rolls and cookies.

"Retail is definitely a shot in the dark, in the sense that most days we sell out," Visger explained. "We're busy, but you have those random days ... no one comes in."

Many choices

Breakfast pastries are available on-site as well as through a pre-order option. Among the choices are: donuts – Long Johns (chocolate, vanilla, maple); filled (Bavarian, raspberry); cake donuts (plain, chocolate, coconut, peanut); raised (sprinkles, chocolate and decorative; Financiers – brown butter, French-style muffin (always gluten-free) typically available in blueberry or raspberry;



Chad Visger, owner of Pastries by Chad with his wife, Sam Siewrok, shows off some seasonal work in December at his downtown Elkhorn retail location. The bakery – which recently celebrated its first year of business in the former Elkhorn Pastry Shop – offers bread, donuts, specialty cakes and much more.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Dining Guide*

Scones – buttery dense scone topped with strawberry or apple compote; Cinnamon rolls – with traditional icing or Italian buttercream; Croissants – butter, chocolate or almond; Danishes – flavors generally include sweet cheese, ham and cheese, spinach and ricotta, and cherry; Bear Claws – a puff pastry filled with almond paste; Muffins – seasonal variations with flavors including apple cider, pistachio, blueberry, raspberry, etc.

A breakfast sampler is also available, which feeds 18-24 people and includes a variety of 24 pastries.

Pastries by Chad has nearly endless options for cakes/cupcakes, numerous flavors of Petit Fours, Entremets, and custom printed image sugar cookies.

The retail store regularly has macarons available in a variety of flavors that may include vanilla, lemon, coffee, pistachio, raspberry and chocolate.

Signature pies are available in two sizes and cheesecakes come in a variety of flavors.

Friendly neighbors

Visger was quick to note his neighbors on North Wisconsin Street, including Perkup Coffee Shop, Los Tres Hermanos, Spark Studio, Friends on the Square and Someplace Else restaurant.

He said the family aspect of owning a business among these other business owners is a great help.

"I would be remiss if I didn't talk about how great our neighbors are," he said.

"To be honest, it's just everyone. Everyone on this block is just one big family," Visger explained.

"We're very close knit," he added.

He said early in the year they would look at the past year and re-examine.

"It's a lot of planning," he said.

Pastries by Chad can be reached by calling 262-379-1187.

The retail store is open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and closed Sunday and Monday.

Healthy food tips to get back on track

Aurora nutritionist suggests setting goals, celebrating successes

By **Jason Arndt**

STAFF WRITER

Late in the year, people often overindulge in holiday foods, satisfying their sweet tooth and consuming a larger number of calories.

But early in the New Year, the return to healthy eating can be a challenge for some people, according to Theresa Glasgow from Aurora Health Care.

A manager of Food and Nutrition Services at Aurora, Glasgow oversees patient services, procurement, production, retail, inpatient clinical diets and outpatient nutrition services. She's a registered dietician with 17 years experience at Aurora, serving in various roles.

"Getting back on track and staying on track after overindulging during the holidays can be difficult, but setting realistic goals and celebrating successes along the way can help," she said in a previous interview.

Glasgow said some people use mobile



Theresa Glasgow

apps on their phones to track their food intake and physical activities, which provide a wealth of information and can be help aid in a person's success.

Additionally, some people have found it helpful to share their goals with a friend, which also serves to hold them accountable.

"Whatever method is used, it's important to understand that if they get off track again, it's okay and to reevaluate what's important to them and revise their plan if needed," she said.

Bodies need fuel

For people looking to exercise, lose weight, or both, Glasgow said they should commit to making necessary lifestyle changes to meet their objectives.

She said exercise is an essential part of a person's daily routine for overall health and recommends aiming to eat specific foods that can serve as fuel for activity.

"Some nutrient-dense foods to help fuel workouts are whole-grain cereals, low fat yogurts, fruits, vegetables and water," Glasgow said. "To maintain endurance during longer exercises, people should limit simple sugars that can cause blood sugar to crash before their workout is complete. It's also good to avoid saturated fats that can slow down digestion, which could take away oxygen from the system."

People looking to lose weight should focus on sleep habits, hydration, diet habits, sugar intake and mindful eating, Glasgow said.

Sleep habits include maintaining regular patterns and schedule while staying hydrated offers a variety of benefits.

"Keeping your body hydrated with enough water will keep your organs healthy," she said. "It also boosts your metabolism and can suppress your appetite."

Glasgow said it's equally important to pay attention to portion sizes of foods and be mindful of food intake.

"Limiting added sugars – particularly in beverage choices – can help," Glasgow



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Individuals can consider several strategies in an effort to stay on track with healthy eating – beginning with setting goals and celebrating their successes. Recommended food choices include vegetables, fruits and whole grains such as low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans and nuts.

STOCK PHOTOS Dining Guide

said. “Be aware that sugary beverages such as fancy coffee drinks, smoothies, energy drinks, rehydration drinks and sodas may have a high concentration of sugars.”

She said small incremental improvements can help, and in turn, add up quickly.

Promoting heart health

Heart disease is a common health concern among many Americans.

According to Glasgow, having an overall healthy dietary pattern is important for promoting heart health, and adding a diverse amount of nutrients is necessary to combat heart disease.

“Make sure to consume a wide variety of fruits and vegetables that include all the colors of the rainbow, choose whole grain options, prepare foods with little or no salt, keep processed food intake at a minimum, choose healthy lean meats or non-meat protein foods, and limit alcohol intake,” Glasgow said.

She recommends the DASH diet, which stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. It consists of a balanced eating plan that helps create a heart-healthy eating style for life. The plan does not include any special foods, but instead offers daily and weekly nutritional goals.

The plan specifically recommends eating vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, including fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and vegetables;

and limiting foods high in saturated fat such as fatty meats, full fat dairy products and tropical oils, like coconut, palm kernels and palm oils.

Additionally, the DASH plan also encourages limiting sugar-sweetened beverages, like soda, as well as sweets.

“When following the DASH diet, it’s important to choose foods that are low in saturated and trans fats, rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber and protein, and lower in sodium,” Glasgow said.

Foods that promote heart health include tuna, salmon, avocados, and walnuts, all of which contain omega-3-fatty acids, lean meats such as chicken and turkey, nuts, seeds, and tofu or other soy products.

Legumes, like chickpeas, lima beans, lentils, and kidney beans, also promote heart health.

However, before people start a diet, they should have a conversation with their primary care providers.

“It’s important to always consult with your health care provider or a registered dietician to discuss diet and lifestyle changes that may benefit you based on individual circumstances and medical conditions,” Glasgow said. “Patients seeking services with a registered dietician should request a consultation referral from their health care provider.”

Tips for those on the go

Some people have an active lifestyle,

often spending more time away from home, which can prove challenging in an effort to make healthy food choices.

Glasgow understands this first hand as she and her husband both work full-time and they have two children with active schedules.

“Unfortunately, most of our meals are away from home, but there are some things I recommend to keep food options in check,” she said.

People should plan meals and snacks in advance, which can ensure they are receiving an ideal food balance, she explained.

“Meal prepping for the week can help keep portions reasonable and helps reduce impulse eating or needing to grab quick convenience foods when strapped for time,” Glasgow said.

She said having healthy snacks – such as trail mix, granola bars, packaged tuna pouches, and dehydrated fruits – available while on the go can also help.

“If you have the means to keep cold perishable food items at a safe temperature below 41 degrees such as in a cooler with ice packs, I’d recommend things like string cheese, Greek yogurt, hummus with veggies, and individual cartons of milk,” she said.

Glasgow earned a bachelor of dietetics degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and completed a dietetic internship at the University of Michigan Health System in Ann Arbor.

Make baking fun for the entire family

Family fun can entail many things, but producing delicious food in the kitchen is a popular way for adults and children to get together and let loose.

Teaching kids how to follow a recipe and produce a finished meal imparts important lessons in everything from measuring to math to science. Cooking also shows kids that follow-through can lead to delicious results.

Any recipe will do when cooking with kids. However, baking desserts may be particularly enticing to youngsters who won't want to wait to dig into a sweet treat.

Plenty of things can enhance the enjoyment factor of baking for children. Families can explore these ideas to make baking more fun.

Accept the mess

Expecting baking to be a tidy process is setting yourself up for failure. Kids, particularly younger children, may not have the dexterity needed to keep everything neat and clean.

Prepare for spills, flour trails on counters, poorly cracked eggs, and sticky situations. Keep a damp cloth nearby and go with the flow. Dress baking participants

in clothes that can get soiled or invest in matching aprons.

Assign age-appropriate tasks

Young kids will want to get in on the action, so figure out which tasks they can safely handle. These include measuring ingredients, mixing with a spoon, scooping batter into pans or tins, and adding chips or sprinkles to items.

Adults should man electrical equipment and knives and handle tasks that involve a stove.

Let kids choose flavors and colors

Cater the recipe to the kids' likes and tastes. They will be more likely to participate fully if the end result features flavors they enjoy.

Explore the sensory experience

Enable kids to feel the different textures of the ingredients, from the coarse sugar to the silky flour.

Talk about how ingredients change in texture when they are blended together and baked. Let kids watch baking soda bubble

when an acid is added to it.

Try smaller tools

Invest in a set of kid-sized baking tools, such as spoons and spatulas, to make them easier to maneuver with small hands.

Encourage creativity

Let children come up with funny names for their creations, and don't cringe if they combine food colors or shapes that might not turn out so pretty.

Be encouraging of the process and the results so kids want to continue baking in the future.

Listen to upbeat music

Music can help set the tone of the baking experience. Have children pick some of their favorite songs and let that playlist run in the background.

Bounce and dance along while ingredients are being combined.

Baking is an activity that family members of all ages can take part in. The process is more fun for children with some planning.

(METRO CREATIVE)

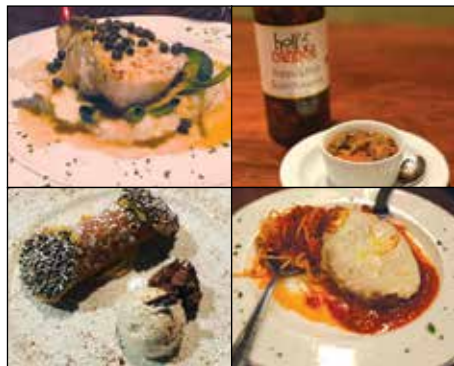
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- Bruschetta** (4 pieces) - Toasted Italian bread, chopped tomatoes, garlic, olive oil & basil
- Fried Calamari** - Do you really need a description?
- Grilled Calamari** - Grilled calamari drizzled with a balsamic vinaigrette
- Italian Sausage & Peppers** - Sautéed in a garlic white wine sauce
- Mussels** - Red or white sauce
- Rotolini** - Thinly sliced baked eggplant, stuffed with ricotta cheese & served with marinara sauce
- Fried Mozzarella** - Served with marinara sauce

Salads

- Cannoli Salad** - Mixed greens, cucumbers, onions, corn, carrots, bell peppers, tomatoes and roasted peppers topped with mozzarella and tossed in Italian dressing
- Caprese Salad** - Sliced tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, extra virgin olive oil, topped with fresh basil
- Caesar Salad** - Romaine lettuce tossed in a Caesar dressing topped with shaved parmesan and croutons
- Side House Salad** - served with Italian dressing

Pasta

Choose a noodle and a homemade sauce

Noodles

- Angel Hair** - Long, super-fine noodles
- Fettucini** - Thick, flat, long noodles
- Gnocchi** - Ricotta pasta dumplings
- Linguine** - Long, flat strands
- Penne** - Shaped like a quill
- Rigatoni** - Tubes with lines
- Spaghetti** - Long, thin strands
- Gluten Free Penne**

Sauces

- Alfredo** - Parmesan cream sauce
- Alio Olio** - Garlic & Olive Oil
- Arrabbiata** - Spicy red sauce
- Bolognese** - Meat sauce
- Marinara** - Red sauce
- Pesto** - Basil, garlic, parmesan & pine nut puree
- Putanesca** - Red sauce with black olives, capers, garlic, onions & a hint of anchovy
- Vodka Sauce** - Creamy tomato sauce

Additional Sides

- Meatballs or Italian Sausage • Chicken • Shrimp • Broccoli or Spinach • Rapini (Seasonal) • Poppy's Giardiniera
- Add vegetable to pasta

Entrées

- Chicken Marsala** - Chicken breast sautéed with mushrooms in a Marsala wine sauce
- Chicken Parmesan** - Lightly breaded chicken breast topped with mozzarella & marinara sauce served over spaghetti
- Chicken Vesuvio** - Chicken with garlic & oregano in a white wine sauce served with peas & potato wedges bone-in or boneless
- Cannoli Chicken** - 1/2 of whole deboned chicken, herb infused in a lemon butter sauce
- Eggplant Parmesan** - Lightly breaded eggplant topped with mozzarella & marinara sauce served over spaghetti
- New York Strip Steak*** (12oz.) - Grilled to your liking topped with sautéed mushrooms served with mashed potatoes and broccoli
- Tilapia Francese** - Tilapia filet dipped in a light flour & egg batter sautéed in a white wine sauce

*Cooked to order. Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, shellfish or eggs may increase your risk of food borne illness.

It's always a good time for

PIZZA

By **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

Here's a closer look at two places in the area

Pizza is often a favorite choice for a snack or a meal – to eat alone or to share with family and friends.

In the Lake Geneva area, there are numerous places where the quality of pizza exceeds expectations and offer a wide variety to please different tastes.

Here's a deep dish dive into two popular pizza places in the area.

GINO'S EAST

While Gino's has been a staple in Chicago since 1966, it opened in Lake Geneva in 2007, near the lake front where much of the activity occurs throughout the year – on Wrigley Drive by Flat Iron Park.

"We are the place to gather for pizza after an event in downtown Lake Geneva," said Tyler Ostrander, who has helped run the kitchen at Gino's East Pizzeria for several years. "At any given time, you will see groups in here, most often sharing a pizza or two."

Gino's East offers a variety of pizzas along with a good selection of appetizers.

"The item most popular on our menu is the deep dish pizza," Ostrander explained. "And the most popular of the deep dish pizzas is either the pepperoni or the sausage."

The deep dish pizza at Gino's is available in three sizes: small – which is cut pie style in four slices; the medium – cut in six slices; and the large, which contains eight slices. The size options make it possible to order a larger pizza to share or individual pizzas, perhaps with more of a variety of toppings.

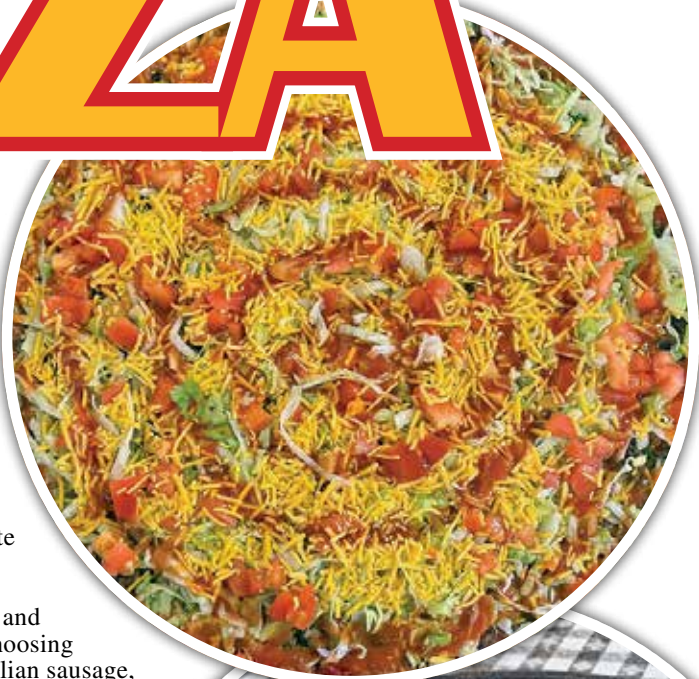
There are four specialty deep dish

pizzas at Gino's. For the meat lovers, there is the Meaty Legend, which contains pepperoni, Italian sausage, bacon and Canadian bacon. Another favorite is the Gino's Supreme Pizza, which brings in the best of both meats and vegetables. Start by choosing either pepperoni or Italian sausage, which is paired with onions, green peppers and mushrooms. A special Margherita pizza is offered and there is a vegetable pizza on the menu for those who prefer a vegetarian diet or a somewhat healthier option.

While many prefer the Chicago-style, deep-dish pizza, there are others who will always choose thin crust. It, too, comes in a variety of sizes but unlike the deep dish, the thin crust is measured as medium (12 inches), large (14 inches), and extra large (16 inches). The thin crust also comes in the same four specialty types of pizza as the deep dish. Either kind can also be prepared as a build-your-own pizza with individual choices as far as toppings.

Pizza is a universal favorite among all age groups but, according to Ostrander, in the summertime many of the larger groups that come into Gino's are between 20 to 30 years of age.

At the same time, he said, the restaurant attracts families with children as well as multigenerational groups who stop in after a busy day

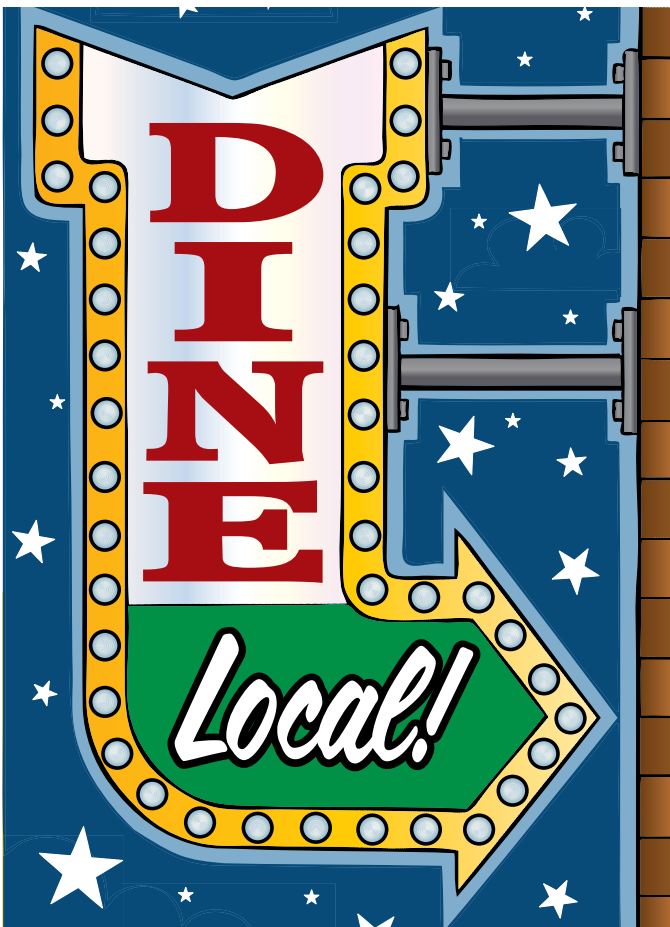


from top: For Cinco de Mayo last May, Luisa's featured a tostada pizza.

COURTESY LUISAS PIZZERIA *Dining Guide*

Fresh from the oven, this deep dish pizza at Gino's is ready to be enjoyed. Traditional deep dish pizza has sauce on the top.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Dining Guide*



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in Lake Geneva.

While pizza is the best seller and clear favorite item at Gino's, they also offer a variety of other foods that work well with pizza or separately from it.

A variety of appetizers, including the Gino's family platter, is a favorite way to begin the meal. The family platter includes hand-rolled spinach mozzarella sticks, calamari and the restaurant's creamy spinach artichoke dip.

A variety of salads are also available, sandwiches that include Buona beef, as well as several pasta dishes.

And don't forget about dessert.

"When you are ready for dessert, the favorite is the deep-dish brownies served in a pan with three scoops of ice cream," said Ostrander. "It is not a dessert that can be eaten by just one person because of its massive size and richness. There's enough to be shared."

Gino's East is at 300 Wrigley Drive, Lake Geneva. For more information, reach them by phone at 262-248-2525 or visit them online at www.ginoseastlakegeneva.com. The restaurant is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

LUISA'S PIZZERIA

Located at Highway 50 and 317th Avenue in Salem, Luisa's Pizzeria has been owned by Paul De Luisa for more than 25 years. It has become known for good quality and unique pizza – made to order along with a variety of other Italian and American dishes on the menu.

De Luisa has a strong Italian heritage coupled with a legacy of quality Italian cooks in the family. He said he has learned from them that using the best ingredients will result in a quality product.

"Built on the legacy of great family cooking by the likes of my great grandmother and father, Luisa's dedicated staff works with the best ingredients to serve phenomenal pizza, traditional Italian dinners, American dishes, and sandwiches every day," he said on the website.



Gino's East, located at 300 Wrigley Drive is ready to provide the pizza you are craving.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ Dining Guide



This building has been the home of Luisa's or over 25 years. The restaurant also offers several Italian entrees and many other food items. Raised high in the air, the sign for Luisa's Pizzeria, which is in Salem, can be seen from Highway 50.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ Dining Guide



His goal was to develop the best pizza in the area and according to an annual award, appears to have succeeded. Luisa's earned the best pizza west of the I (Interstate 94) not just once or twice but every year since the award, which is presented by the Kenosha News, was created in 2011.

"We offer a variety of pizza choices sure to please everyone," De Luisa said. "Thin crust pizza with cheese and sausage, or pepperoni and cheese are the most popular choices."

Luisa's has many pizza crusts – to suit taste as well as dietary needs. In addition to the traditional thin crust pizza, they also offer gluten free crust, cauliflower crust, and pan or stuffed crusts. Whatever type of crust is chosen can be customized with the toppings of choice.

While cheese and sausage or pepperoni are the most popular, the pizzeria also offers a variety of combos to please any person's palate. As De Luisa explained, not every pizza has to have a red sauce, cheese, and sausage or pepperoni.

Unique special pizzas include a BBQ sauce with chicken, and a broccoli and cheddar pizza with an alfredo sauce. One that some have probably never eaten is the Brian Vita pizza, which is topped with ham and sauerkraut. It is noted on the menu that this pizza is especially popular in Iowa. Another is the cheeseburger pizza, consisting of ground beef, cheddar cheese and pickles spread on a ketchup and mustard base.

And pizza is only a part of what's offered at Luisa's. "We are also known for our chefs' award-winning soups and great featured entrées," De Luisa said on the website.

Indeed, as the restaurant has a variety of made-to-order Italian dinners, which are prepared fresh when ordered. In addition, Luisa's not only has a Friday fish fry but it's available every day.

Luisa's Pizza is at 6806 317th Ave., Salem. For more information, call 262-537-4795 or visit the website at luisaspizza.co. The restaurant is open Wednesday through Sunday, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., and is closed Monday and Tuesday.



The interior of Luisa's has a good amount of space for those dining in, including room for large groups.

COURTESY LUISAS PIZZERIA Dining Guide



While it's too cold now to enjoy time on the deck at Gino's East, in summer it's filled with customers enjoying the view of Geneva Lake while dining at the restaurant. Gino's large dining room is an ideal place to enjoy a pizza in downtown Lake Geneva.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ Dining Guide



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A place to gather, eat, and shop

Friends on the Square in Elkhorn has a little bit of everything

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**

STAFF WRITER

For Kelly Odling, calling her shop something like a scene out of “Little House on the Prairie” rather tickles her fancy.

After all, it was her friends calling her Laura Ingalls that inspired her business, Friends on the Square, located at 41 N. Wisconsin St. in Elkhorn.

With Odling now running a combination café and gift shop – plus a pair of food trucks and an event space – she’s still focused on her mission from when the business opened nearly 14 years ago.

“I basically wanted something to offer to the community that was pretty much open for making friends,” Odling said. “Making memories was my big thing. I wanted kids to remember this place as they grew up.”

Odling’s store – on the corner of North Wisconsin and Court Street, kitty corner to Veterans Park – has the feel similar to an old-time general store. Various displays throughout offer a large variety of gifts, but in the center of the store is the coffee bar and ice cream cooler that were at the heart of the business when it first opened.

While ice cream availability varies based on the season (predictably, there are less flavors as the weather grows colder), the drink menu offers the traditional coffee, hot cocoa and flavored drinks one would expect from a coffee shop.

There is the coffee of the day, but also espresso shots, macchiatos, cappuchinos, lattes and more.

Odling recently made the switch from Monin syrups to 1883 for her flavored drinks, which she said is a flavor upgrade for customers.

Now, in addition to coffee and ice cream, there is also a menu featuring soup, sandwiches and pastries – everything made fresh on site.

“That was not in the plan,” Odling joked, but the food has given customers another



Kelly Odling’s shop, Friends on the Square has been a successful café, gathering space and gift shop since opening nearly 14 years ago. Located in downtown Elkhorn at 41 N. Wisconsin St., Friends also offers a private event space.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Dining Guide*

option in downtown Elkhorn.

“We don’t bring anything in,” Odling said, adding that they make fudge fresh on site as well.

Gifts

The wide variety of gifts that Friends offers was also a part of the original plan – though not in its current incarnation.

Originally, Odling was selling mostly Elkhorn-related items from Overwear. Now, her inventory has shifted as Overwear is in its new incarnation.

While clothes are still available, it is more of a boutique offering – food-themed socks from “Eat My Socks” that feature everything from burgers to pizza and more, a selection of women’s clothing and an assortment of handbags.

But there are also body care items, bath bombs and baby clothes, kitchen items like microfiber hand towels, coffee mugs and drink tumblers, candy, seasonal decorations and more.

The idea, Odling said, is to be as unique as possible with other gift shops cropping up in the downtown Elkhorn area.

“I felt like I needed to dabble into a little bit, or a lot, of everything,” she said.

Event space – and more

While Friends can (and does) host small gatherings on the main floor, there is a private event space upstairs as well.

It is not handicapped accessible, however, so is available for booking only. That space has held wedding and baby showers, weddings, birthday parties and more – and can hold up to 100 people.

There is Backyard at Friends – a bar space with a number of cocktails available on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Monday. The outdoor space offers live music, including the Glenn Davis Blues Band every Monday.

And the business has two different trucks available for various events – Friends on the Fly, which offers everything ice cream like sundaes, shakes and more, plus the Friends Bev Bar, which is a mobile coffee shop.

The Bev Bar was at the Walworth County Fair this year, while Friends on the Fly is a regular at the Elkhorn Food Truck Festival.

Friends on the Square is currently in its fall hours through Dec. 24 – Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., with the same closing time on Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Starting Dec. 26, the shop will only be open until 6 p.m. through March. Summer hours are 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, call the store at 262-723-2909, check out the Facebook page by searching Friends on the Square, or visit the website at friendsonthesquare.com.

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