

Bear's pub food popular



Deana Lancaster and Jan-Christian Sorensen

dlancaster@nsnews.com
jsorensen@nsnews.com

A better name for a pub cannot be found.

After another season of having our fence climbed; our (now kept empty) garbage cans battered around in the darkest hours of the night; and my adrenaline sent sky-high during yet another fast start to wakefulness; I can fully appreciate the moniker given to my neighbourhood pub.

But beyond their aptitude for naming the joint, the publicans that run The Black Bear Neighbourhood Pub in Lynn Valley know what makes a good night (or midday, or evening) out: a cosy, bustling atmosphere; an extensive list of bottled and draught beers and ciders; plenty o' TVs to watch the game on; and excellent food. Guess that's why I keep going back.

And go back I did last week, with The Sports Reporter in tow, as well as a few other odd assorted Newsers for a post-work nosh. We figured it's past time this favourite hangout of mine gets a little credit in The Dish, though I am far from



NEWS photo Terry Peters

ON the menu at The Black Bear: the Salmon Parcel, served with a Gorgonzola lemon caper cream sauce; Indonesian Curry Pasta; and the Mediterranean Lamb Shank (front).

the first to discover it.

He said:

It's a life-or-death struggle that can easily be won or lost in the blink of an eye.

I'm not talking about deer hunting, staring contests or ancient grudges between armour-clad gladiators in the Coliseum.

I'm talking about the field of battle at the Black Bear Neighbourhood Pub in Lynn Valley on a Friday night: trying to out-jockey your way to a precious seat at the

popular local haunt is not so much a challenge as it is a clever game of Restaurant Risk. Mass your troops, plan your attack and advance quickly and with cunning. It's a take-no-prisoners public house rendition of musical chairs.

That was the scene recently as a group of my co-workers gathered at the Bear for a good old-fashioned post-work nachos-'n'-beer bitch session. The group included, of course, my benefactor Foodie Spice, who was again

forced to drag her bourgeois pizza-eating sportswriter compatriot along for the ride (although she's no doubt blown away by the fact that I used the word "bourgeois").

It's a dangerous game of cat and mouse. Scope the surroundings, order a beer and watch the tables like a hawk as you mill about in the foyer. Any sudden movement, a signal for the bill, even a trip to the bathroom and it's time to pounce. We stationed two

See Ostrich page 37

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the Bay
CORRECTION NOTICE
 In our 10-4A The Giving Is Easy Sale, on page 5, save 25% off jewellery by ToGo, Mantles and Roots offer should read save 25% off sterling silver jewellery by ToGo, Mantles and Roots. On page 11, Pierre Belvedere boxed Christmas cards are late - rainchecks are available at the store. On page 12, Samsung 1.0 cu. Ft. microwave and toaster oven combination will be late - rainchecks are available at the store.
 In our 10-4B Make This Season Magical flyer, on page 11, Outline handbag shown is \$29.99 everyday. On page 22, Naturalizer shoe photo at far right and outline shoe photo second from the right are reversed. On page 42, Cuisinart Mini-Prep Plus food processor in white is regular \$49.99, sale \$43.99. Cuisinart Mini-Prep Plus food processor in brushed chrome is regular \$54.99, sale \$48.99. Cuisinart cordless kettle photo is incorrect.
 In our 10-4W Ultimate Weekend Sale flyer, on page 5, 50% off kid's dresswear offer should read save 25% off all kids' dresswear Boys' and Girls' size 2 to 16.
 Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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dining

Ostrich burger healthy and tasty

From page 35

co-workers on the deck Friday night: one to keep a close eye on the diminishing levels of ale in the glasses of our target table and the other, his wife, to flirt with the patrons as a possible plan B. I was simply going to set off their car alarm, but I've always been a take-the-bull-by-the-horns, Che Guevara type of diner.

You have to cover your bases, folks. It's war.

Once seated, my cohorts and I opted to begin with the nachos. The Black Bear's come topped with the standard chopped green onion, tomatoes and thick-cut jalapenos and accompanied with the guacamole, salsa and sour cream triptych. While hot and tasty, I'm a big hard-arteried cheese fan, and a few more sprinkles of the three-cheese blend would have sealed the deal.

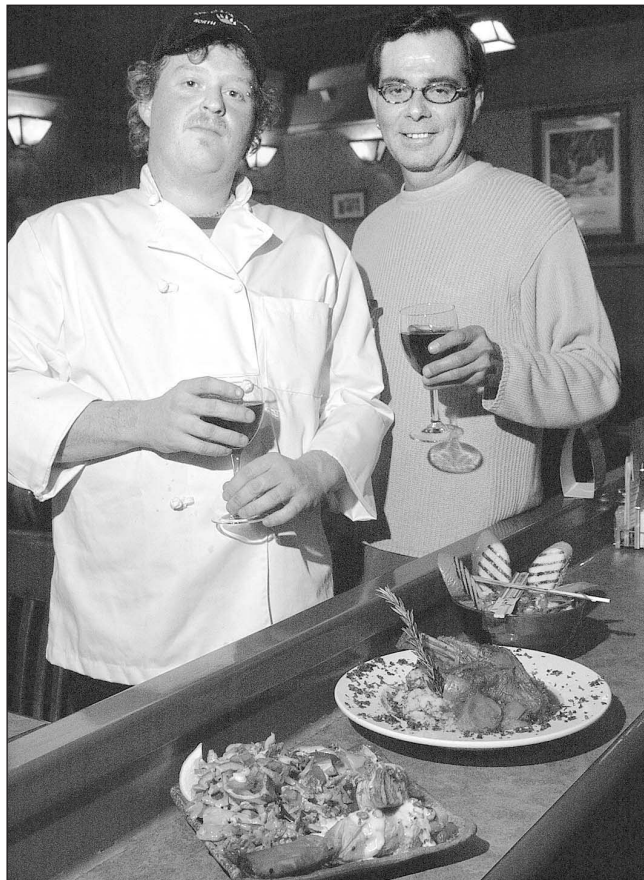
But there was nothing awry about my entree: a picture-perfect Smokehouse Burger with in-house smoked jalapeno jack cheese, tangy chipotle barbecue sauce and bacon atop grilled ground chuck served medium.

Accompanied by planks of crispy french fries and the first period of the Canucks game, it was the perfect way to end the day — even if I had to mix work with pleasure.

Troops, prepare to suit up. Survey the territory. Stand your ground. Never give in, never give up, never say die. Think Patton, think MacArthur, think . . . Emeril!

The Black Bear's food and drink (and atmosphere) is well worth the war.

She said:
What I love best about



NEWS photo Terry Peters

BLACK Bear managers Dan Follett and Milos Indic dish up better-than-average pub fare.

The Black Bear . . . have always loved . . . is the food. This is miles beyond your standard pub fare. Oh sure, if you want chicken wings, fries or nachos they're yours for the asking, and they're better than most.

But if you're feeling daring you can start your meal off with The Black Bear's Stuffed Avocado, filled with hand-peeled shrimp, Peruvian lime and chile mayonnaise; Firecracker Prawns, served with olive oil, cracked chilies, garlic and linguine; Crab &

Asparagus Dip, made with Asiago cheese; or the Salmon Parcel — a flavourful envelope of phyllo pastry filled with a salmon filet and topped with a Gorgonzola lemon caper cream sauce (it could only be made tastier by the use of wild B.C. salmon, rather than farmed Atlantic).

Move on to mussels (served in a variety of broths); wraps; burgers or sandwiches. Or order from a list of mains that includes Tempura Fish & Chips, Bistro Steak, Chicken Roti or a selection of pastas.

Call me a creature of habit. Though I've liked most everything I've tried at The Black Bear I always seem to go back to my favourite: The Matterhorn Burger with an ostrich patty.

That's right, I said ostrich patty. Though it's classified as poultry, ostrich meat is red, and has a similar (though milder) taste and texture to beef. Best of all, it's a healthy choice: it has about one-third fewer calories, fat and cholesterol than chicken.

Mind you, taking it as a Matterhorn burger: loaded with sautéed mushrooms, Swiss cheese and crisp bacon, likely cancels out all the benefits of choosing a leaner meat — but it's delicious, so I keep doing it anyway. And I had the full support of my companions: after trying it, all gave a thumbs up to the burger's juiciness and flavour.

As with all The Bear's wraps, sandwiches and burgers, I got my pick of cup-of-soup, thick-cut plank fries, coleslaw, or Bear Patch Salad. I went with the latter: a huge helping of crisp greens, chopped tomato, bell pepper and red onion, drizzled with a tangy house vinaigrette.

Together with the nachos, a pint of Alexander Keith's and a cranberry and soda the bill for The Sports Reporter and I fell just shy of 45 bucks.

The Black Bear Neighbourhood Pub is located at 1177 Lynn Valley Rd., North Vancouver. Best chance to get a seat is mid-week, midday or both. Call 604-990-8880 for more information.

North Shore News dining reviews are conducted anonymously.

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