



NEWS photo Mike Wakefield

BEAR ESSENTIALS ... A sumptuous feast presented at the new Black Bear neighborhood pub in the Lynn Valley area of North Vancouver.

Valley bags a Bear

The Black Bear Neighborhood Pub, 1177 Lynn Valley Rd., North Vancouver, 990-8880. Visa, MasterCard and American Express accepted. Open from 10 a.m. to midnight Monday through Saturday and from 11 a.m. to midnight on Sundays. Brunch available on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Fully licensed. Vegetarian options? Some. Take the kids or call a babysitter? Call a babysitter.

A beer-slinging black bear in the land of the Smiling Crabs? Times they are a changin' yet again, faithful North Shoreites.

For the better, me thinks. Lynn Valley has finally arrived. It has its own neighborhood pub — an unthinkable occurrence not long ago.



Timothy Renshaw

table hopping

This place of Valley Boys, Ant Hill Mobs, aforementioned Smiling Crabs, Dayton boots, daredevil hijinks in Lynn Canyon and general frontier exuberance and bare-knuckled lifestyles was not considered a fit place for pubs.

Valley lore has it that law enforcement officials in years past were less than keen on the approval of any liquor licences in the Valley area. When one well-known Valley legend inquired after a temporary liquor licence for an

area event, the local constabulary was rumored to have cracked: "Giving a liquor licence to you (notorious Valley personality) would be like giving a blasting cap to a child."

'Nuff said your honor. But where Valley Boys failed, ex-Queens Cross boys have prevailed.

Ron Slinger and Dave Raht, the duo behind the Cross for 17½ years lobbied long and hard — over four years of disentangling themselves from North Vancouver District red tape, you say? — to bring a neighborhood pub to Lynn Valley, and on Feb. 9 at 5 p.m. they celebrated the opening of *The Black Bear*.

General manager Milos Indic, an 11½-year *Queens Cross* veteran, also made the move with Slinger and Raht to the Bear.

Located on key Lynn Valley Road frontage on the northwestern edge of the Lynn Valley Centre mall, the *Bear* offers 16 different beers on tap (Guinness, Kootenay Black, Rickard's), eight of which are from micro-breweries (Bowen Island, Spring, Shaftesbury, Storm Brewing, Tree and Coquihalla), and will offer 24 when it is in full bruin stride.

Its menu, meanwhile, reflects the bear's omnivorous nature: everything from Vegetable Spring Rolls and Firecracker Prawns to Philadelphia Cheesesteak Wraps, hamburgers (all five selections come in chicken, beef or veggie variations), pasta and New York Steak.

Price range: openers and appetizers \$3 to \$10; hamburgers, wraps and sandwiches \$7 to \$12; pastas and entrees \$7 to \$13.

The *Bear's* kitchen delivers the aforementioned with a deft and hearty Valley grace. No mere pub grub this, me boyos.

A sampled Italian Veggie burger was very good.

The patty was a moist and substantial mix of grains, nuts and vegetable matter. Sandwich between a thick fresh bun, some fancy lettuce, some tomato and onion slices and top with sharp asiago cheese, a mild basil pesto and a sprig of fresh basil and you have a robust luncheon — Valley style.

It comes with a choice of House or Caesar salads, soup or fries.

The sampled House salad consisted of mixed greens tossed in a sweet mustard dressing.

The *Bear* is airy, bright and new.

Built along classic Craftsman-style lines, it has the pub-standard 65 seats inside and another 20 on its open-air veranda.

The latter is on the *Bear's* southeast corner. Not much of a view, unless you like mall parking lots, but on a warm day it is the place to be for a Valley luncheon.

It was packed on Table Hopping's midday visit.

The *Bear's* interior, however, is also extremely agreeable: a hunting lodge stone fireplace; high peaked ceilings; natural wood all round with rich copper trim; a trio of overhead TVs at the bar and the traditional dart board corridor.

Service is prompt, and the ambience is fired by the good neighborly spirits of Valley folk enjoying their first quality watering hole.

The *Bear* is finally out of hibernation and not a moment too soon for the long-suffering Valley.