

Best Happy Hour

Ailerons Casual Cafe and Taverne

Heather Webb
Staff Reporter

Of all the happy hours in town, Ailerons Casual Cafe and Taverne makes customers the happiest.

Five years ago, Terry and Linda Spurlock instituted happy hour at their restaurant, and it has been a success for them ever since.

"We like to look at it as a way for the kids to unwind on Friday afternoons," Linda said. "We have some older patrons that love to come in during that time because they like to be there amongst happy

people."

The Spurlocks agreed that happy hour has been good for their business, and Terry and Linda intend to keep it going, although he said it is not as popular as it used to be.

"Interestingly, even though it's big, it's probably one-third the size it used to be," Terry said. "I think there's an element of competition."

Terry also said that in the last five years, student alcohol consumption has gone down, and he thinks it is for the best.

At happy hour, Ailerons offers drink specials and sells buffalo wings for half price. It is Fridays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

- Runners-up:**
2. Too Tall's Two Eatery and Spirits
3. Patterson's

Best Sunday Night Special

Ailerons Casual Cafe and Taverne

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Ailerons Casual Cafe and Taverne may be one of the busiest restaurants in Kirksville on Sunday nights, thanks to the restaurant's Sunday night specials.

Terry and Linda Spurlock, the owners of Ailerons, said that about five years ago, their business was very poor on Sunday nights. They knew they needed to remedy the situation, so they offered cash rewards to employees who could help them come up with ideas for stimulating business.

One employee suggested offering the discount, and Ailerons has been offering 40 percent off certain menu items ever since.

Linda said that before the specials, "Sundays were very quiet."

She now describes business as "wall-to-wall."

Terry said they chose which items would be on the discounted menu based on which dishes yielded the highest profit. Even though they are not making as much money on those items on Sunday nights, he said he definitely views the specials to be good for business.

"Now everybody else in town does it too, so we're very flattered by that," Terry said.

- Runners-up:**
2. King's Buffet
3. Bellacino's

Best Delivery Place

Papa John's Pizza

- Runners-up:**
2. Bellacino's
3. Pagliai's Pizza

Best Buffet

King's Buffet

- Runners-up:**
2. China Palace Restaurant
3. Ponderosa

Best Pizza

Papa John's Pizza

- Runners-up:**
2. Domino's Pizza
3. Pizza Hut

Best Margarita

El Vaquero

Michelle Pratt
Assistant Features Editor

Be it on the rocks or frozen, many patrons enjoy a refreshing margarita at El Vaquero. The restaurant offers both lime and strawberry, but senior Josh Brotman he likes lime because it is more masculine.

"They're good," Brotman said.

Margaritas are sold in small and monster sizes, or by the pitcher. Senior Maggie Kroepf said she and her roommates often visit the restaurant on weekends to share a few pitchers during friendly conversation.

"We all have a favorite flavor," she said. "We usually try to take turns ordering between the two."

The restaurant also sells other frozen drinks, including strawberry, peach and pina colada daiquiris.

- Runners-up:**
2. El Jimador
3. Patterson's

Best Desserts

Dairy Queen Brazier

- Runners-up:**
2. Patterson's
3. Ailerons Casual Cafe and Taverne

Best Drink Special

Too Tall's Two Eatery and Spirits

Ryan O'Shea
Index Staff

It sounds like an item off the value menu at McDonald's, but any frequent patron of Too Tall's Two Eatery and Spirits knows it's the cheapest way to drink in town.

The "two for two" drink special at Too Tall's runs from 10 p.m. to close every weeknight except Friday. Owner Debbie Masten said she got the idea for the deal by talking to some of her employees.

"I have happy hour at four, but [students] don't come in at four," she said. "It's kind of the happy hour for college kids."

One of Masten's former managers came up with the slogan "two for two."

- Runners-up:**
2. Dukum Inn
3. Patterson's

Best Restaurant



Dan Sem/Index

Plates of roast duck and other fine foods are served to Karol Lynn Johnson, her son-in-law Lewis Binford, a Truman instructor, and the rest of their party Monday night at Minn's Cuisine.

Minn's Cuisine

Heather Webb
Staff Reporter

Chandeliers hang from the ceiling and sconces adorn the walls. Fresh flowers grace the tables, and the music plays softly. At Minn's Cuisine, the atmosphere enhances the dining experience.

Julie Minn and her husband, Wen, opened Minn's 20 years ago. Originally, it was a French restaurant, but over the years, the menu has evolved to include traditional American dishes and a number of Chinese meals.

"My husband for a long time wanted to have a nice place for the community," Julie said. "For some time, it didn't go as well as we wished it to, and then, we started changing it."

When Minn's opened, three French chefs prepared the meals, and they created the original menu. The chefs left after two years, and Julie took over the cooking.

"It's very hard to keep a

professional chef here," Julie said. "In those two years, I just learned from them."

Julie said that before opening the restaurant, she did not consider herself to be much of a chef. Now, she does nearly all the cooking at the restaurant. She said many of her dishes are inspired by meals she has eaten at other restaurants.

"Through all those years, sometimes I had a good meal in the city, so I came home and I would just try to create or imitate the dish I liked," Julie said.

Julie said people always ask her where she learned to cook, and she jokes that she must have been a chef in her past life because she has never taken cooking lessons.

Junior Devin McCart, a waiter at Minn's Cuisine, said he thinks the food at Minn's distinguishes it from other restaurants in Kirksville.

"A lot of it is pretty

original food," McCart said. "A lot of customers come back purely because of the way it's cooked."

Julie said some of the most popular dishes are the filet mignon, the duck and the lamb. She also said pasta and seafood dishes are popular.

Senior Sherry Rhoades said she enjoys eating at Minn's because of the atmosphere.

"I would say the atmosphere is conducive to talking," Rhoades said. "When you want to go someplace nice, that's the first place I think of."

McCart said he thinks eating at Minn's is worth the money, and compared with similar restaurants in St. Louis, the prices are low.

He said he thinks part of the reason people like to eat there is that the meals are served in three courses.

"It's not come in and go out," McCart said. "When you come there, you expect to stay. It's relaxing."

Julie said she enjoys the atmosphere of Minn's because it is a small restaurant where all her employees are friends.

The entire staff is male, and the employees all belong to one of two social fraternities on campus, Phi Kappa Tau and Sigma Phi Epsilon. She said this makes it easy on her because she never has trouble finding help.

"Everybody here, we work as a family," Julie said. "The waiters are always passing down the job to their brothers."

Julie said her father-in-law gave her and her husband the idea for opening Minn's. He said they should give back to the community that has accepted them. The couple is originally from Taiwan.

"Without the college, I don't think we'd be able to run this restaurant," Julie said. "And without this nice community, I don't know if we would have the opportunity to establish this restaurant."

- Runners-up: 2. El Vaquero 3. Ailerons Casual Cafe and Taverne**