



**1st & Main**  
by Rich Belmont



This past week a few readers asked me who I was writing about next and I replied "1st & Main". Then they asked me "where is that?" Seriously? It's at the corner of 1st and Main in Dubuque!

This new bar is in a very old building. It was built in 1900. According to Mike Gibson at the Center for Dubuque History at Loras College (michaeltgibson@loras.edu) in its early years it was a grocery, flour and feed supply store owned by John J. and Anthony J. McKeown. You can see the name McKeown Bros in the floor tiles in the entryway.



1st & Main's owners are John and Sara Oglesby. They officially opened on August 15, 2014. Prior to opening, though, they spent many months renovating and remodeling. They installed an all new commercial kitchen, new heating and air conditioning system and two new bars for the first floor and in the stone-walled basement. Their goal was to create a meeting place with a modern atmosphere for Dubuque residents. And a great place to see sports events on the seven large screen TV's. And a great place to enjoy upscale made-from-scratch meals a whole lot better than typical bar food. Without a doubt they succeeded in all of that!

After only a few short weeks Dubuque's newest bar is operating like it has been on their namesake corner for many years. John and Sara attribute this to all their experienced staff: including Bar Manager Frank Albach, and Floor Managers Tyler Blasi and Kelly Williams.



So what about the food you ask? Well, I must say it's all really good and certainly is way more delicious than you might expect. This is because John and Sara had the wisdom to choose Ryan Miller to be their Executive Chef. He is from East Dubuque, IL and started working in restaurants when he was fourteen. Chef Miller is a very creative and talented cook who honed his culinary skills at the Kitchen Buffet inside the Diamond Jo Casino and Main Street Steak and Chophouse. His menu has quite a few delightful surprises.

A few examples from the appetizer list are: The Stuffed Mushrooms made with fresh Silver Dollar, otherwise known as oversized white button mushrooms; Steak Bites cut from flank steak tips; and Chicken Wings with choice of buffalo, garlic parmesan, Asian peanut or house made root beer bourbon BBQ sauce.

Other appetizers include Buffalo Chicken or Bacon Mac n Cheese Egg Rolls that are rolled in-house. The Beer Battered Onion Rings and the Beer Battered Pickles are extraordinary. The bread & butter pickle slices are a little on the sweet side so they compliment the batter very well. Another one of the starters is a choice of one, two or three imported cheeses. The cheese selections are chef's choice and are a testament to his sense of good taste. At this time they are: Wensleydale with lemon, a cheese that is only aged for 3 weeks and has a clean, mild, slightly sweet flavor with a honeyed aftertaste; New Zealand Kikorangi blue cheese that has a blue mold evenly distributed throughout the cheese; and Egmont Cheddar, a cheese with a smooth, slightly nutty flavor that strikes a balance between cheddar and gouda. Here is a fun fact: cheddar has always been popular in Great Britain and was actually named after the Village of Cheddar in Somerset, UK.

Salad lovers can choose Greek, Chopped Salad or Chicken Caesar all containing fresh, crisp greens.

There is also a nice assortment of Flatbreads. I recommend the Margherita with olive oil, sliced tomato, fresh mozzarella and fresh



basil or the Chicken Artichoke containing house-made cream sauce, spinach, artichokes, red onion, minced garlic, mozzarella and parmesan.

The Burgers are hand crafted from Certified Angus Ground Steak. The 1st & Main Burger is the one everyone is raving about. The hamburger patty is placed on top of a layer of peanut butter and jelly and then covered with pepper jack cheese and bacon. Believe it or not it has quickly become the most popular item on the menu!



**1st & Main**

101 Main Street, Dubuque, IA 52001  
563-587-8152 | www.1standMainDBQ.com

**HOURS:** Bar: 11 a.m. – Close Daily  
Kitchen: 11 a.m. – 9 p.m., Daily

**DINING STYLE:** Come as you are

**NOISE LEVEL:** Loud when busy

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Stuffed Mushrooms, Chicken Wings, Steak Bites, Egg Rolls, Nachos, Parmesan Crisp, Flat Bread Pizzas, Meatball Sandwich, Root Beer Roasted Pulled Pork, Philly Cheese Steak, Mac'inator, Greek Chicken Sandwich, 1st & Main Burger

**LIQUOR SERVICE:** Full Bar

**BAR SPECIALTIES:** Bottoms Up Beer Dispensing System, House Specialty Cocktails

**PRICES:** \$7.00 - \$16.00

**PAY OPTIONS:** Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards, ATM on premises, no Checks

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Side Door on 1st Street & Restrooms

**KIDS POLICY:** Menu, High Chairs, Booster Seats

**RESERVATIONS:** No **CATERING:** No **TAKE OUT:** Yes

**DELIVERY:** No **PARKING:** On Street



The Chicago Beef and Philly Cheese Steak sandwiches are outstanding. They are prepared from shaved Prime Rib which has been slow roasted in the kitchen for 5 hours. These sandwiches are served on artisan baguettes baked locally by East Mill Bakeshop.



Other interesting sandwiches include Fish Tacos with fried tilapia, jalapeño slaw and Cusabi dressing. Cusabi is made in-house by combining mayonnaise, finely chopped cucumber, lemon juice, garlic and wasabi horseradish. The Mac'inator is a macaroni and cheese and pulled pork combo on wheatberry bread. The macaroni in this sandwich is actually cavatappi which is great pasta for holding cheese sauce. The Greek Chicken Sandwich is a baked chicken breast coated with basil pesto, topped with lettuce and tomato, and then sprinkled with feta cheese.



Chef Miller roasts pork shoulder for 12 hours in a Root Beer Bourbon BBQ sauce. He makes this wonderful sauce starting from scratch following his own secret recipe. Then he creates his Root Beer Roasted Pulled Pork sandwich by piling pulled pork on a brioche bun and topping it with jalapeño slaw.

My favorite sandwich is the awesome Meatball. Chef Miller did not want to tell me how he does his meatballs but I already know because they are just like the ones my Italian mom used to make. Ground beef is mixed with bread crumbs, eggs and parsley and then covered with an especially tasty marinara sauce and mozzarella.



All the sandwiches are served with fries. And these fries are not just any old fries. They are called sidewinders and you have your choice of the Chef's own seasoning blend or garlic parmesan. They are both exceptionally tasty so take your pick. You can also substitute coleslaw, pasta salad or a side salad if you prefer.



Do you recall I said the beef sandwiches are made with shaved Prime Rib? Well, on Tuesday nights you can order a 12 oz. slab of that Prime Rib. When you taste it you will know why those sandwiches are so good!

1st & Main is a thoroughly modern bar and so it comes as no surprise it gives us the area's first Bottoms Up Beer Tap System (BottomsUp.com). I suggest you order Miller Lite, Coors Light, Bud Light or Budweiser beer Bottoms Up and watch the bartender fill you glass from the bottom up. You heard that right! There is a hole in the bottom of the beer cup and it's a wonder the beer doesn't drain right out while the cup is filling.

Of course there is a whole list of other beers on tap. I counted 18 of them including Halcyon, Stella Cidre, Schafly Pumpkin Ale, Bell's Two Hearted Ale, West Coast IDA (India Dark Ale), Guinness, Slingshot, 312, and Hoegaarden.

There is a whole list of Specialty Cocktails that are as flavorful as they are unusual. A few examples include:

- **Johnny Boy** – Templeton Prohibition Era Iowa Whiskey and raspberry tea.
- **Blueberry Pancake** – Blueberry Vodka, maple syrup and Frangelico.
- **Moscow Mule** – Vodka, ginger, beer, and lime juice served in a copper mug.
- **Chocolate Martini** – Vanilla Vodka, Crème de Cacao, Frangelico, White and Dark Godiva Chocolate and Cointreau.

John and Sara are up and running but they aren't slowing down anytime soon. They have so many ideas so very soon you will see daily soups, breakfast burritos, a late night menu and live entertainment. Visit 1st & Main and see for yourself: It's not only a bar and a restaurant: it's a great place to hang out with your friends.