



CAROLINE'S RESTAURANT

REVISITED
BY RICH BELMONT

Caroline's located on the first floor of the luxurious Hotel Julien Dubuque, is totally dedicated to providing casual, yet elegant meals in a beautiful atmosphere befitting a first class hotel and spa.

Caroline (Rhombert) Fischer was the great-great-grandmother to the three cousins who own the Fischer Companies and Hotel Julien Dubuque. She was a businesswoman and a driving force to be reckoned with and the inspiration for the name of the hotel's restaurant. Caroline's husband, Louis, was a partner in the Fischer Ice business. In 1875 he fell into the Mississippi River while cutting ice, contracted pneumonia and subsequently died. Suddenly, Caroline, who was 31 at the time and the mother of 5 young children, found herself operating a business. She worked hard and sacrificed much eventually buying out Louis's partners while investing in downtown Dubuque and riverfront property. The Fischer Companies owns and maintains most of these properties to this day.



Since September 10, 2015 Caroline's Restaurant has been under the command of Executive Chef Jason Culbertson. He is an accomplished and innovative chef with over 17 years of experience in the culinary industry.

He holds an Associate in Culinary Arts degree awarded in 2005 from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts, Mendota Heights, MN. He has held positions as Executive Chef of Bittersweet on the Bluff, East Dubuque, IL, and General Manager and Executive Chef of Potosi Brewery and Holiday Gardens, Potosi, WI. Most recently he was Chef de Cuisine at Woodfire Grill in the Diamond Jo Casino. Chef Culbertson is a truly talented culinary artist who continues to collect accolades. Recently he was awarded the Peoples' Choice Award at the Dubuque March of Dimes Signature Chef's Auction.

Chef Culbertson is ably assisted by his young and very capable Sous Chef, Kelly Wacker. She is a 2009 graduate of Le Cordon Bleu. She interned at Chianti Grill, Roseville, MN and was a Chef at Ferrari's Ristorante and the now-closed My Verona both in Cedar Falls, IA.



The Front of the House Manager is Paula Mangeno. She was a manager at Perkins Dubuque for 12 years and a manager at Ponderosa Steak House in Dubuque for 15 years.

The last five years at Ponderosa Paula was the Traveling Manager responsible for training the general managers and staffs and the opening and closing of new Ponderosa locations. During those years she was affectionately known as "The Traveling Boss Lady."



Fiona Howard is the Assistant Front of the House Manager. She attended Cornell School of Hotel Administration, Ithaca, NY. She has acquired diverse experience having

worked at The Peaks Resort and Spa, Telluride, CO; Swann Lounge—The Four Seasons Hotel, Philadelphia; Aquavit, New York City's premier Nordic restaurant; Jean-Georges in Central Park and the Morrell Wine Bar & Café in mid-Manhattan.

Hotel Julien Dubuque's resident professional mixologist is Brian Neiss. He has been creating cocktails since he was 14 years old in a Wisconsin bar. That was 35 years ago when there were no Wisconsin laws restricting kids from working in bars. Brian is an expert in the knowledge of flavor profiles. A few months ago he won the Regional Competition of the Iowa Restaurant Association's Annual Iowa Mixology Contest. He then went on to place 2nd in the 2015 State Championship. In these competitions the mixologist must create unique and new cocktails from designated liquor sponsors. Brian created the following unique drinks:

- Julien's Pearl: Made with lime basil Pearl Vodka
- Bourbon Lemon Grass Smash: With Jim Beam Basil Hayden Bourbon
- Herb Saint Smooth: From Sazerac Herbsaint. This is an anise flavored Liqueur first produced in New Orleans in the 1930's.

The mixology contestants must demonstrate proficiency in appearance, garnish, taste, creativity and proper bartender personality. When you want a perfectly mixed cocktail Brian is the man to see. And I might add he is also an accomplished beer and wine sommelier. He has added many beers to the beer menu so there are now at least 45 to choose from. The wine list has been updated and expanded. You now have a choice of 13 wines by the glass and at least 64 bottles including many red blends, several French red wines, many California Cabernet Sauvignon and a few Merlot and Pinot Noir selections.



Caroline's opens for breakfast at 6 AM on week days and 7 AM on week-ends. In addition to the usual fruit bowl, oatmeal, muffins and eggs with bacon or sausage there are some interesting

specialties. The Banana Bread French Toast starts with fresh oven baked banana bread dipped in a blend of secret ingredients, plus cinnamon, vanilla and egg. Then its topped with Amaretto caramelized bananas. The Iowa Breakfast is certainly a hearty breakfast: two eggs cooked your way with bacon, sausage or ham, toast and has browns or American fries. I enjoyed the Build Your Own Omelet and my favorite breakfast is still the Eggs Benedict Florentine. This is a wonderful dish of poached eggs and Canadian bacon on muffins covered with a smooth white Florentine sauce blended with spinach, cream cheese, a little white wine and Fontina and Parmesan cheese. (Fun Fact: Florentine is restaurant code for anything with spinach).

It's easy to see why Caroline's is a popular mid-day meal spot for business people and the ladies who lunch.

The house-made signature soup is the Spicy White Bean Chicken Chili. Tomatoes and roasted red peppers are cooked and the pulp is discarded. Then they are added to a chili of chicken breast meat along with special seasonings, heavy whipping cream, northern white beans, a little hot sauce and cilantro.

You can create your own work of art salad by selecting spinach, romaine or house mixed greens and then choosing from 18 other ingredients. Make it a masterpiece by adding Ahi tuna, grilled chicken, grilled salmon, shrimp or steak.

Burger lovers always want the Classic Burger. It's a Certified Angus half pound patty cooked on a char broiler. The beef comes from Iowa Premium in Tama, IA. This company exclusively supplies family-farm raised corn fed Black Angus Beef raised locally from farms not more than 150 miles from Tama.

The Chicken Pesto Sandwich and the Chicken Pesto and Parmesan Flatbread are both tasty lunch choices. That's because both have homemade delicious pesto. It's made with fresh garlic, fresh basil and olive oil.

Caroline's dinner menu is a treasure trove of gustatory delights. The appetizers are all quite tasty. In my opinion three of them are stand-outs:

Stuffed Mushrooms: a large portabella crown is stuffed with carefully wilted spinach, garlic herb cream cheese, roasted peppers and bacon.



Artichoke Fritters: chopped artichoke hearts are blended with cream cheese, parmesan and cheddar. Then the mix is rolled into balls and coated with egg and seasoned bread crumbs and deep fried. They are served with a spicy aioli consisting of mayonnaise, garlic, chive and a touch of hot sauce.

Bourbon Glazed Shrimp Skewers: six extra jumbo size shrimp are tossed in a spicy bourbon glaze and grilled.

All of the dinner entrées are wonderful choices. Some of the truly outstanding ones are:



Roasted Pork Tenderloin: Herb covered oven roasted pork tenderloin with a choice of a maple, cinnamon and cherry glaze or mango chutney. If you are like me you will ask for the sauce on the side so you can enjoy the taste of the pork all by itself.

Soy Braised Short Ribs: These are slow roasted for 12 hours until fork tender, then braised with a sweet soy sauce.



Caprese Chicken: An airline chicken breast covered with grape tomatoes, fresh mozzarella and basil, then drizzled with balsamic reduction. (By the way: an airline chicken breast is a breast with drumette attached. The drumette is the upper part of the chicken's wing).

Friday and Saturday nights are particularly good nights to dine at Caroline's. That's because Chef Jason showcases his talents with Dinner Specials. Recently we had:

Bourbon Beef Medallions: Certified Angus Beef, apple cider demi-glace, grilled portabellas, horseradish mousse and Caroline's signature Smashed Red Potatoes.



Bone-In Ribeye: Huge 22 ounce steak grilled with the Chef's own seasoning blend served with oven roasted potatoes and asparagus.



Jumbo Sea Scallops: Fresh U-10 scallops topped with chopped mangos for citrus flavor. (Fun Fact: U-10 means there are under 10 scallops to a pound. The smaller the number the larger the scallops are by weight).

All of these dinners are so good it's almost a law that you must top them off with a scrumptious dessert:

Strawberry Shortcake: A Caroline's classic.



Caramel Pecan Turtle Cheesecake: Topped with caramel sauce, chocolate drizzle and chopped pecans.

Bread Pudding: Thick slices of homemade bread pudding loaf covered in a Bailey's Irish Cream and bourbon rum sauce.

Chocolate Ice Cream Sandwich: Vanilla bean ice cream stuffed between two freshly baked chocolate chip cookies

Chocolate Torte: Rich chocolate cake layers separated by chocolate mousse and topped with whipped cream.



Before you leave Caroline's take a few minutes to check out the stained glass windows and the charger plates decorating the walls. These are decorative plates used to adorn the tables in some of the most elegant fine dining restaurants from around the world. The Pfohl family collected them as mementoes of their travels. You will see plates from many famous temples

of the culinary arts including Maxims, Paris; Palace Hotel, Lucerne; Eagles Nest, Hong Kong; Aruba Caribbean, Aruba; Antoine's, New Orleans; Waldorf-Astoria, New York City; Escoffier, Beverly Hills; Fontainebleau, Miami Beach; and Hotel Tropicana, Las Vegas.

CAROLINE'S RESTAURANT INSIDE HOTEL JULIEN DUBUQUE

200 Main Street, Dubuque, IA 52001

563-588-5595 • HotelJulienDubuque.com

Hours: Sun: Breakfast 7 AM-1 PM; Dinner 4:30-9 PM
Mon-Thu: Breakfast 6-10:30 AM; Lunch 11 AM-2 PM; Dinner 4:30-9 PM; Fri-Sat: Breakfast 7-10:30 AM; Lunch 11 AM-2 PM; Dinner 4:30-10 PM

Dining Style: Business Casual

Noise Level: Comfortable

Recommendations: Iowa Breakfast, Build Your Own Omelet, Eggs Benedict Florentine, Banana Bread French Toast, Artichoke Fritters, Caroline's Spicy White Bean Chili, Create Your Own Salad, Classic Burger, Shrimp Skewers, Seafood Mac N' Cheese Bake, Caprese Chicken, Roasted Pork Tenderloin, All Chef Jason's Dinner Specials

Liquor Service: Premium Bar, Extensive Beer and Wine List

Prices: Breakfast: \$4-\$9; Lunch: \$8-\$12; Dinner: \$10-\$30

Pay Options: Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards, No Checks

Accessibility: Front Door and Rest Rooms

Kids Policy: Menu: Yes; High Chair: Yes; Booster: Yes

Reservations: Highly Recommended

Catering: In House Only • **Take Out:** Yes • **Delivery:** No

Parking: Private Lot Behind Hotel, Entrance on 2nd St