

WOODSTONE RESTAURANT

BY RICH BELMONT

If you play golf you know The General Golf Course is one of four courses at Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa. You are probably also aware The General, which opened in 1997 to rave reviews, is Eagle Ridge's crowning achievement and consistently ranks among Golf Digest's top 100 courses.



However, you might not know the clubhouse at The General is called Woodstone. It is open to the public and is quickly gaining a reputation as one of Galena's finest restaurants. The recent rise in prominence can be largely attributed to the

introduction of a young, talented Restaurant Manager, Brielle Schneider and the addition of a young creative and skilled Executive Chef, Chad Schissel. Brielle and Chad have only been at Woodstone for 3 months and I predict that by the end of next season, largely through their talent and hard work, Woodstone will be as critically acclaimed by us foodies as The General Golf course is by golfers.

Brielle Schneider holds a degree in Hospitality Management from Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, IA. She has experience in fine dining from working in the college's restaurants and is certified in liquor, wine and beverage management.

Chad Schissel has been in the culinary field for thirteen years and has worked in ten restaurants. He started as a dishwasher then cooked at the Midtown Marina in East Dubuque, IL. Prior to being appointed Executive Chef at Woodstone he was in charge of the Kitchen Buffet in the Diamond Jo Casino and the Mercy Medical Center Dining Room in Dubuque.

Woodstone has 5 beers on tap but it specializes in craft beers. The current list has 13 unusual and exceptionally flavorful selections. Here are four of them that I have particularly enjoyed:

- Hop Rise Central Ale—Central Waters Brewing Co., Amherst, WI. An explosively hoppy yet sessionable IPA.
- Oak Barrel Aged Scottish Ale—Traquair House Brewing Company, Scotland. Scottish brown ale aged in oak barrels.
- Framboise Lamic—Lindemans Brewing Company, Belgium. Naturally fermented with raspberries. Goes great with chocolate desserts, fresh raspberries and ice cream. By the way, Framboise is the French word for raspberry and Lambic is a type of beer traditionally brewed in Brussels and the Pajottenland region of Belgium. It is produced by spontaneous fermentation in a process that gives the beer a distinctive cidery flavor with a slight sour aftertaste.
- Not Your Father's Root Beer—produced at City Brewery in La Crosse, WI under contract with Small Town Brewery. This is my favorite root beer of all time! It is the real thing as it contains 5.9% alcohol. This is what root beer tasted like before breweries took out the alcohol during the prohibition era.

There is also a nicely stocked wine cellar with several enticing selections available by the glass as well as the bottle.

Woodstone excels in charbroiled meats, thin crust pizzas and entrées baked in ovens filled with the smoke of hickory wood chips. Only fresh ingredients are used and the sauces and dressings are made in-house.



For starters I recommend the Spicy Fire Grilled Wings. They are flash fried and finished in the wood fired oven with a house sweet and spicy sauce mixed with Sriracha. My favorite appetizer is the Laugenbrezel. It is a giant traditional soft German pretzel. It is made from scratch, folded into a pretzel loop, brushed with garlic oil and sprinkled with sea salt. It is very tasty just as it is but it is accompanied by beer mustard and cheesy ale sauce.

The Black and White Soup is most interesting. Two different delicious soups: Spicy Black Bean and Potato Leek are poured into the same bowl. You can eat them separately because somehow they do not mix together.



The Native American Chili lives up to its name. Ground bison from the Iowa Bison Company is simmered with peppers, onions, tomatoes and jalapeños then mixed with ground Fritos and topped with cheddar cheese.

The Silo Salad (a clever name since there is an actual stone silo attached to the restaurant) is the most popular salad. It is a mix of baby greens, sundried tomatoes, dried cranberries, goat cheese, toasted almonds, avocado and pear. It is served with Lemon Fig Dressing. The dressing is made in-house: first the stems are removed from dried figs then they are mixed with red wine vinegar, sugar, canola oil, lemon zest and fresh lemon juice.

The sandwiches are distinctly upscale. The Philly Beef is seasoned shredded beef piled into a sourdough hoagie bun along with roasted peppers, onions and provolone cheese. Fun Fact: in Philadelphia the official Philly Cheese Steak is made with cheese whiz but provolone is the very popular and optional second choice.



The burger is an excellent choice. It is a half-pound ground Black Angus hand pressed patty on a Brioche bun. It is served with lettuce, tomato, red onion and pickle slices.



The pastas are very good and what you would expect to be served in an Italian Restaurant. For example: the Fire Cracker Shrimp is a bowl of farfalle (bowties) pasta mixed with blackened shrimp, olive oil and garlic. The Chicken Penne Alfredo is a bowl of penne (Italian for quills) covered in home-made Alfredo sauce. The Alfredo is prepared from heavy cream, grated parmesan, nutmeg, garlic and onion powder, fresh chopped garlic and white wine.



The pizzas are a specialty of the house. They have an excellent thin crust and a smoky flavor. I like the Meat Amore loaded with Italian sausage, pepperoni, ground beef, bacon and fresh mozzarella. Of course, like always my favorite is the Margarita simply made with the symbols of the three colors of the Italian flag: tomatoes, mozzarella and basil.



The Entrées enhance Woodstone's status from typical golf course clubhouse to fine dining establishment. The BBQ Ribs are splendid considering this restaurant is not a smokehouse. The tender Baby Back Ribs are oven roasted for two hours then braised with a BBQ sauce. The flavor is enhanced through the Chef's expert application of beer and Montreal Steak seasoning. This seasoning, also known as Canadian Steak Spice, is a spice mix based on the pickling dry-rub used in preparing Montreal smoked meat.

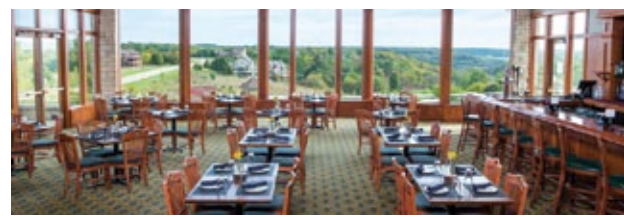


The Beer Battered Cod is coated with a batter containing Woodstone's signature Screaming Eagle Ale. This ale is brewed exclusively for Eagle Ridge Resorts restaurants by Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company in Chippewa Falls, WI.

Margie's favorite dinner is the Walleye Meunière (muh-NAIR). Fun Fact: this literally means miller's wife in French. It describes a style of cooking in which meat, typically fish, is seasoned and lightly dusted with flour and sautéed in butter.

On September 1st Chef Chad is introducing a new menu. Most of the items I have heretofore described will be on this new menu. So here I am listing a few of the exciting additions the Chef is planning for our pleasure:

- Fresh tomato Basil Bruschetta (broo-SKEH-tah) on Crostini.— Fresh tomatoes and mozzarella on French bread toasts.



- Smoked Salmon Croquettes (kroh-ketts).—whole fresh Atlantic salmon flown in once a week, house-smoked and rolled with cream cheese and herbs, breaded and deep fried.
- Chicken Season Caesar Wrap—fresh romaine with parmesan cheese, sliced tomatoes, croutons and Caesar dressing rolled inside an herb flour tortilla.
- Shenandoah Burger—hand pressed, half pound Black Angus on a pretzel bun topped with cheddar cheese, bacon, BBQ sauce and haystack onions.

I expect Chef Chad's new Woodstone Specialties are destined to make this restaurant famous. Here is just a sampling of some of the dinners he has planned for us:

- Grilled Salmon with Dill Cream Reduction—fresh hand-cut grilled Atlantic salmon served with lemon dill cream sauce, roasted vegetable risotto cake and seasonal vegetable.
- Pina Colada Chicken—roisserie style chicken topped with pineapple coconut glaze.
- Zander Filet Meunière—pan seared in the meunière style Great Lakes Zander-Pike topped with brown butter. Interesting facts: the Zander-Pike fish is also known as a Pike-Perch. It is closely related to a perch but resembles a pike. Zander and Walleye are almost indistinguishable in taste. Zander is prized for its light, firm but tender meat with few bones and a delicate flavor.
- Grilled Ribeye—topped with Feta cheese and homemade Béarnaise sauce.
- Hickory Bacon Wrapped Filet Mignon—center cut Black Angus tenderloin wrapped in hickory bacon and topped with homemade Béarnaise sauce.

Béarnaise sauce originated in the province of Béarn, France. It is made from clarified butter emulsified in egg yolk and white wine vinegar.

Tuesday nights are a good time to visit. That's because it is \$2.00 Wine Night. Friday is another good time. Every Friday is Chef Carved Beef Brisket Night. And there are special Chef's Choice features every Friday and Saturday night as well.



If you are like me you will be sad to see your fantastic Woodstone dinner come to its inevitable yet satisfying conclusion. So cheer yourself up with one of their luscious desserts! Ask your server to show you the dessert tray. On our last visit our waitress enticed us with Chocolate Banana Cake, Chocolate Flourless Cake, Red Velvet Cake and three Cheesecakes: Chocolate Peanut Butter, Raspberry Swirl and Key Lime.



My favorite dessert was not on the tray since it is the house specialty and it is baked to order. It's called the Dark Chocolate S'Mores Skillet. Its menu description says it all: Rich Molten Lava Brownie with Chocolate Cream, Jumbo Marshmallows and Graham Cracker Crumbs Cooked to a Golden Brown in our Wood Fired Oven!

WOODSTONE RESTAURANT

109 Eagle Ridge Drive, Galena, IL 61036
815-776-5252 • EagleRidge.com

Hours: Sun–Thu: 11 AM–9 PM; Fri–Sat: 11 AM–10 PM
Closed for Winter Season November through April

Dining Style: Casual

Noise Level: Conversational

Recommendations: Spicy Fire Grilled Wings, Laugenbrezel, Black and White Soup, Black Angus Burger, Wood Fired Pizza, BBQ Ribs, Walleye Meunière, Beer Battered Cod, S'mores

Liquor Service: Full Bar, Melon Liqueur Hole in One

Prices: Lunch: \$5–\$12; Dinner: \$5–\$30

Pay Options: Cash, Debit, All Credit Cards, No Checks; ATM on premises

Accessibility: Front Door & Rest Rooms

Kids Policy: Menu; High Chairs; Boosters

Reservations: Yes • **Catering:** Yes • **Take Out:** Yes

Delivery: No • **Parking:** Large Private Lot