



**Mainstreet Steak & Chophouse**

by Rich Belmont



I have some great news! Mainstreet Steak & Chophouse is still an elegant and sophisticated restaurant serving unusual and creative American cuisine. However, the menu has been totally revamped with lower prices!

The trick was to continue to offer a fine dining experience while at the same time keeping the prices affordable. If any anybody could pull this off it would be Matt and Sarah Kluesner. They are the owners of Mainstreet Steak and Chophouse and also Crust Italian Kitchen + Bar in Dubuque. They previously ran The Star Restaurant and Ultra Lounge and before that the Backstreet Steakhouse in Galena.

The Kluesners are experts in fine dining. Matt has been running commercial kitchens for several years. Sarah's parents were in the restaurant business so she literally grew up in restaurants. She graduated from the University of Houston, Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel Restaurant Management. She not only holds a BS in Hotel and Restaurant Management but also a culinary degree from the Art Institute of Houston International Culinary Program. After completing her education she gained experience at Morton's The Steakhouse and also Ruth's Chris Steakhouse.

To be sure, Mainstreet is a happening spot where you are immersed in refined, tasteful surroundings. Sarah did the décor herself. She installed stylish chandeliers and reupholstered the booths in silver. She purchased new, comfortable chairs direct from Flexsteel Industries in Dubuque. The divider separating the private room from the main dining area is made from 110 year old windows reclaimed from an old building on South Main Street.



The huge wall photos were provided by David Wahlert. They are all scenes from the Dubuque Packing Company and are from the Harry W. Wahlert collection. On the stairs leading to the downstairs bathrooms is a photo of the legendary H.W. Wahlert inspecting meat in one of the packing plant's lockers.

Sarah has a simple philosophy: Everyone deserves to sit in a nice place where they can meet friends for a few drinks or have a casual meal with the family or entertain business associates over a premium high quality dinner.



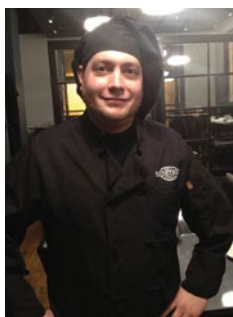
To that end the bartenders serve generous drinks. They free pour which means no measuring devices are used. There is a large selection of premium micro-brews on tap. One example is the Goose Island Brewery's Sophie Saison Style Ale. A saison ale is highly carbonated, fruity and with higher than normal alcohol content. There is a large selection of fine bourbons and scotch. These are meant to be sipped. So if you prefer them cold they are served with a slow-melting ice sphere made by an ice baller. Of course there is also a collection of specialty modern cocktails. For example you might try a Supernova with X-Rated rum, raspberry purée and pineapple juice or a 1751 made with Hendricks gin, Saint-Germain sauvignon blanc and lemon zest.

Mainstreet Steak & Chophouse is also a slice of heaven for wine connoisseurs known as oenophiles (e-no-files). The wine list is extensive and includes many hard to find estate bottled and reserve wines. Wines by the glass are discounted and are a good value. They are served in oversized "Fish Bowl" glasses (top, right) containing 6 ounces even though a standard wine pour is only 5 ounces. And you can ask your server for the current selection of inexpensive house wines available by the glass or bottle.

Now that this restaurant is open for lunch there is something for everyone including burgers and sandwiches to Prime grade steaks to gourmet specialties. Everything on the menu is available for lunch and dinner. Best of all, the prices are what you would expect to pay in the Dubuque area. Appetizers



range from 5 to 14 dollars, salads and sandwiches are 8 to 12, specialties are 16 to 24 and steaks are all 22 to 30 dollars. There is a Daily Lunch Special Monday through Friday consisting of either beer cheese or French onion soup with a garden salad and unlimited cheddar biscuits for only \$8.00. All sandwiches come with fresh hand-cut, twice cooked French fries tossed in sea salt and brown sugar. Sweet potato fries can be substituted for the House Fries. All Specialties and Steaks are served with house salad and chef's choice potato, usually baked or mashed.



Since the new menu was introduced I have been hearing nothing but rave reviews. Indeed, my tasting crew all said their lunches and dinners were excellent.

Much of the credit has to go to Ryan Miller, the very talented House Chef. Ryan is from East Dubuque. He started his culinary career as a prep cook, then progressed to line cook and chef. Chef Miller trained under Chef Fred Orange at Star Restaurant and Chef Randy Black at Kitchen Buffet in the Diamond Jo Casino.

There are some terrific Starters on the menu (pictured across the bottom of the page). The Beef and Bleu Fondue is a large quantity of tenderloin chunks served with Maytag Blue Cheese Dip. The White Chicken Nachos are pulled chicken with fresh artichokes and spinach mixed with a roasted garlic parmesan cream over a huge bowl of nachos. This is Sarah's recipe and was featured in the Reader's Choice section of Gourmet Magazine a few years ago.

**Mainstreet Steak & Chophouse**  
342 Main Street, Dubuque, IA 52001, 563-588-8001  
www.MainstreetChophouse.com  
Facebook.com/MainstreetSteakandChophouse  
**HOURS:** Lunch: Mon – Sat, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Dinner: Mon – Sat, 4 p.m. – Close, Sun: Closed  
**DINING STYLE:** Casual | **NOISE LEVEL:** Quiet  
**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Ahi Tuna Poke, Beef & Bleu Fondue, White Chicken Nachos, Mediterranean Dip, Mainstreet Wings, French Onion Soup, Buttermilk Ranch Chicken, Burger, Soy Glazed Ahi Tuna, Louisiana Pasta, Grilled Red Snapper, Mustard Salmon, Sesame Tuna, Tomahawk Ribeye, NY Strip Steak, Prime Rib  
**LIQUOR:** Premium Bar, Made from scratch cocktails  
**PRICES:** Lunch: \$7 to \$12; Dinner: \$10 to \$30  
**PAYMENT OPTIONS:** Cash, Debit, MasterCard, Visa, Discover, AMEX, No Checks  
**ACCESSIBILITY:** Front Door and Main Floor Unisex  
**RESERVATIONS:** Recommended  
**KIDS POLICY:** Ask for choices, High Chair, Booster  
**CATERING:** Yes **TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** No  
**PARKING:** On street and city parking ramp

I have several favorites including the Shrimp Cocktail with U-12 size Gulf Shrimp. This designation means the shrimp are really big "Super Colossal" averaging nine per pound. I love the French Onion Soup covered with a gruyère (groo-YAIR) Swiss cheese that has a rich, sweet, nutty flavor. Also, Mainstreet Wings with a sampling of four different sauces of Buffalo, Parmesan Garlic, Asian and Honey BBQ. And I enjoy the Mediterranean Dip with hummus, black olive tapenade, cherry tomatoes and feta cheese.

Several members of my crew found the Ahi Tuna Poke (pronounced poh-kay) to be exceptional. Sashimi grade Ahi Tuna otherwise known as Yellowfin or Bigeye Tuna, is prepared Poke style which is Hawaiian for cut or sliced crosswise. It is served as a ceviche meaning it is literally cooked by the acid in fresh lime juice and served with a teriyaki glaze, red pepper, red onion and fresh cilantro with a side of fried wonton crisps.

The Chopped Salad is another treat. Lettuce is chopped with blue cheese, red cabbage, bacon, tomatoes, cucumber, onion and egg. Ditalini pasta is added in to add a little chewiness. Ditalini is Italian for "little thimble" and is basically an elbow macaroni without the elbow.

The seafood lovers in my crew had a great time with all the fish choices. Like the Soy Glazed Ahi Tuna Sandwich (above, center) brushed with teriyaki soy sauce glaze then seared and served with Asian slaw peanut dressing. Or the Fresh Fish Tacos (top, left) with fresh red snapper grilled with a mango-habañero aioli. The mango neutralizes the heat of the habañoero peppers so this dish is not too spicy.



Then for the those of you who like more heat the Louisiana Pasta (below, #2) containing andouille (pronounced ann-dwee) sausage and crawfish in a spicy seafood cream over fettuccine is quite hot. Wait, there is more seafood! The Sesame Tuna is encrusted with black and white sesame seeds served only rare or medium rare or Margie's favorite: the Mustard Encrusted Salmon (below, center) coated with stone ground mustard and cooked on an open flame charcoal grill.



For chicken fans there is the Buttermilk Ranch Chicken hand dipped fried breast with bacon, cheddar cheese and buttermilk ranch dressing; the Smothered Chicken grilled breast smothered with sautéed mushrooms, onions, peppers and Swiss cheese; the Navajo Chicken grilled breast with pico de gallo chipotle aioli; the Chicken Pesto Pasta; and the Garlic Half Chicken.

Sarah's BBQ Ribs (below, left) are a cross between spareribs and baby backs. They are roasted for 2 and a half hours and coated with a homemade BBQ sauce.



The beef is all USAD Prime Grade. US Prime is the highest grade in quality and intramuscular fat. Currently only about 2.9% of beef is marked as prime and it is sold almost exclusively to hotels and restaurants. The flavor of prime beef is unmistakable. Mainstreet's Signature Steaks are Filet Mignon, Tomahawk Ribeye (below, center), NY Strip and Prime Rib. The Ribeye is also called a Cowboy Ribeye. It has a bone handle and actually does resemble a tomahawk!

I recommend you order the NY Strip with either the blue cheese and pepper crust or the garlic schmear (roasted cloves of garlic, sea salt, fresh chopped Italian parsley and butter).



The Prime Rib (left) is coated with a proprietary homemade rub and is roasted slow and low at 250°F. All the beef is hand cut in-house and aged for a minimum of 28 days.

The desserts are all made in-house too. We were able to choose from Funnel Cake, Tahitian Vanilla Bean Crème Brûlée, Nutella Panini, White

Wedding Cake and Sticky Toffee Pudding (the last three pictured below and right). Margie and I could not stop eating the Nutella Panini. Nutella hazelnut and coca sauce is pressed into bread in a panini press. It was a fitting end to a glorious dinner!

Mainstreet Steak & Chophouse now has a menu that will soon be the talk of the town. How can you go wrong when it is a compilation of all the best sellers from all of the Kluesner's previous restaurants?

