



Pusateri's
by Rich Belmont



The revitalization of Dubuque's North End continues unabated. Pusateri's the Italian restaurant at the corner of Central Avenue and 24th Street remains open while undergoing extensive renovations. Most of the remodeling has been completed already. However, it will take a few more weeks before new outside awnings, ceiling fans, booths and carpeting are installed.



Anybody who has lived in Dubuque a long time knows about Pusateri's. After all, it has been serving fine Italian dinners for over 53 years! Mercurio Pusateri opened a grocery store on Main Street in Dubuque in 1948. In 1959 his sons started Pusateri's Peppe Pizza House on West 15th Street. They relocated to 1292 Main Street 10 years later. I'm told it was such a popular place people had to stand in line on the sidewalk to get pizzas. Obviously a bigger place was needed so the restaurant was relocated again to Plaza 20. Eventually, the restaurant was moved to the current building which had previously been a butcher shop.



Today the business is owned by 3rd generation Dan and Marie Pusateri. It is operated by Marie and her daughters, Cara and Julie, the 4th generation of "La Famiglia". Their motto is Hometown. Homemade. All the sauces: the spaghetti sauce, the pizza sauce, the Alfredo, the Pesto are all made in-house. The pizza dough, bread, lasagna and manicotti are made fresh in the kitchen. And while it is true Pusateri's is an old established Italian restaurant it's also true it is keeping up with modern innovations. One of the latest restaurant trends is Hyper-Local Sourcing. This refers to restaurants growing their own meat and produce. Marie has her own greenhouse and is starting to grow many of the vegetables and herbs herself. She has received assistance from the experts at FarmTek in Dyersville, Iowa. So as not be upstaged by her mother Cara is now raising chickens! (I told her I was glad she didn't live by me.)



The menu is quite large. Six pages describing Munchies, Burgers, Baskets, Pizza, Seafood, Salads, Italian Specialties and American dinners. There are eleven appetizers to get you started. The Bruschetta is a little different since the fresh baked bread is brushed with a creamy sauce topped with Asiago cheese and marinated tomatoes. The Flowering Onion is an onion cut into the shape of a flower and hand dipped and deep fried. The Mile High Fries (above) are topped with BBQ sauce, bacon and mozzarella then baked until the cheese is melted.

The seven salads are all freshly prepared. The greens are crisp, never wilted. Bruschetta Salad contains mixed greens with marinated tomatoes and onions with a little blue cheese and balsamic vinaigrette. The Sicilian Salad is very popular. It has shredded lettuce, olives, pepperoni, onions, tomatoes and parmesan tossed in a homemade dressing.

When you are not too hungry the Baskets are a great choice. The beef baskets are big sellers. You can have French Dip, Philly Beef, Italian Beef or Chicago Dip which is an Italian Beef with giardiniera and au jus.



There are a couple of chicken baskets that are really good, too. The Chicken Bacon Ranch (above) has chicken tenders and bacon toasted with cheese and topped with onion, tomatoes, lettuce and ranch dressing. If you like hot stuff the Inferno Chicken (below) is for you. Tenders are liberally doused with hot sauce, covered with mozzarella and topped with onions, lettuce and jalapeños.



Pusateri's

2400 Central Avenue, Dubuque, IA
563-583-9104 PusaterisDelivers.com

HOURS: Wed – Sat: 4 pm – 10 pm
Sun: 5 pm – 9 pm, Mon – Tue, Closed

DINING STYLE: Casual

NOISE LEVEL: Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Flowering Onion, Mile High Fries, Grilled Steak Basket, Seafood Linguini, Pizza, Chicken Parmesan, Panzarotti, Chicken Bacon Sandwich, Garlic Olivette

LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar

PRICES: \$6.95 - \$22.00

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash, Visa, M/C, NO Checks

KIDS POLICY: Menu Options, High Chair, Booster

RESERVATIONS: Yes

ACCESSIBILITY: Side door and restrooms

CATERING: No **TAKE OUT:** Yes **DELIVERY:** Yes

PARKING: North side and back of building & on street

The Grilled Steak Basket contains a hand cut Ribeye and you have it either plain or with sautéed mushrooms, onions and Swiss cheese.



Pusateri's has a whole list of pizzas. There are Specialty Pizzas like the Meat Lovers with sausage, bacon and Canadian bacon; the Taco with taco meat and sauce; the Seafood Pizza with shrimp, scallop and crab meat; and the Spaghetti Pizza which is just like it sounds. There are also Gourmet Pizzas with Alfredo sauce and Philly Beef or Buffalo Chicken or Olivette. The latter includes artichokes, tomatoes, black olives and garlic. The menu states you can specify Original Crust, Deep Dish or Chicago Style pizza. You can also order a Thin Crust which is what I prefer or a Gluten-free crust as well.

Now that we are into Lent you might be looking for the Seafood entrées. The most popular is the Linguini with Alfredo Sauce over shrimp, crab meat and vegetables. There is also marinated Tuna Steak;

Beer Battered, Lemon Pepper or Broiled Cod; and Shrimp served 5 different ways.

The Italian Specialties include the Calzone and the Panzarotti that are very well known to Dubuque's Italian food lovers. They are a pocket of pizza dough stuffed with your choice of a large assortment of typical pizza toppings including sausage, ground beef, pepperoni, peppers, onions, mushrooms, and green and black olives. The Panzarotti (USA spelling) originated in Naples and is very popular around Milan. In Italy a single Panzerotti is called a Panzerotto and more than one are Panzerotti (above). The original version is the Panzerotto Pomodoro e Mozzarella. This means it is stuffed with only tomatoes and mozzarella cheese. Of course, today these things are full of just about anything you care to add to them. When the Panzerotti is deep fried it puffs up with steam. Therefore it's a good idea to tear or cut it open and let it cool a little before eating. The Calzone is pretty much the same thing except it is baked instead of fried.



Some time ago I went to Pusateri's and enjoyed Mushroom Ravioli (below). These small pasta pillows are stuffed with wild mushrooms, garlic, onions and Grana Padano cheese. I was surprised to see this cheese listed as one of the ingredients. Although it was created nearly 900 years ago near Milan and is one of the most popular cheeses throughout Italy it is not usually seen in the Midwest. Grana Padano is similar to Parmigiano-Reggiano but is not aged as long so it is milder and does not crumb as easily.



On a recent visit I was delighted with the Chicken Parmesan (above). The chicken was crisp and not soggy which sometimes happens when cutlets are baked in tomato sauce. The breast was resting on top of spaghetti and covered with mozzarella. The cheese was nicely melted and not turned into a hard crust which typically happens when this dish is baked too long. When you are in the mood for something different try the Garlic Olivette. Capellini pasta is tossed with seasoned olive oil, black olives, tomatoes, garlic and artichokes. I recommend you make this dish extra special by adding shrimp.



All of your friends are going out to dinner and you don't feel like Italian food? No worries here either. There is a Ribeye steak hand cut in-house and grilled to your liking. Or have the Baby Back Ribs (above) slow roasted for 3 hours or the high pressure Broasted Fried Chicken hand tossed in a homemade breading.

Pusateri's is one of Dubuque's oldest and finest restaurants. It has the same great food but a new look and a new generation. It's no coincidence it is in Dubuque's North End where it seems "Everything Old Becomes New Again."

