

{ 365 dining: thumser's 19th hole }



Thumser's 19th Hole

by Rich Belmont



Everyone knows the 19th Hole is the clubhouse where you go for refreshments after playing 18 holes of golf. This club house, however, is the restaurant at the end of a miniature golf course (closed now and reopens in May). But make no mistake there is nothing miniature on the menu in this place! The hamburgers are huge, the tenderloins protrude from their buns and the steak sandwiches are thick!



Dale and Emmy Thumser are the proud owners of this East Dubuque landmark. Dale is a Dubuque native. He purchased the 19th Hole in 1994 and has now been the chief

cook and bottle washer for over 17 years. Right from the start Dale was determined to serve only food he and his wife love to eat. So there are no short cuts. Sauces and seasonings are prepared in-house. The meat is hand cut, the chicken and fish are hand breaded and the produce is all purchased locally.



The locals all know about the 19th Hole. They have been coming here for years because the food is exceptional and the prices are reasonable. On most nights the bar and large dining room are full. To be sure this is not a full service restaurant. You go in, and take a seat at the bar or sit down at any available table. When you have decided what you are having you go up to the bar and place your order. The first thing you will notice is the staff is friendly and well organized. Each member of the team is capable of doing any job. So you will find Kourtney, Emily, Matt, Chris or Scott ready to take your order, mix your favorite drink and bring your order to your table. The staff is ably supervised by Jennifer Manning and Nick Leslein who might be cooking, tending bar, taking orders, explaining the menu or effortlessly doing all these things at the same time.

When you ask some of the regulars why they come here so often you find it is all about great food and also about a variety of excellent choices. The Cheese Curds are the most popular appetizer. Hot or BBQ wings are also big sellers. The wings are prepared with a delightful homemade sauce.

People come from all over the tri-states for the burgers. This restaurant has its own meat grinder so USDA Choice Grade Beef is freshly ground every day: over 500 pounds of it every week! It's fun to build your own burger by choosing from twelve toppings. My favorite is the green olive and Swiss cheese.

The most popular burgers are half pounders so you can figure the kitchen is putting out approximately one thousand burgers per week. There are one third pound burgers too. However if you are really hungry you can order The Big One: a full pound of beef served with a pound of French fries!

You probably don't want a burger every day so there are many other great items on the menu. For example, the BLT (right) contains a thick slice of fresh tomato, crisp lettuce and a half pound of bacon. There is no scrimping on the bacon in this place! Or perhaps you would like the hand cut grilled pork tenderloin. For you pork lovers the Pork Fritter is a real treat. The kitchen has its own tenderizer so tenderloins are freshly tenderized to make fritters cooked with homemade seasonings. The fish sandwich is haddock and the chicken is breaded on the premises with a



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1625 Route 35 N, East Dubuque, IL 61025, 815-747-8819

HOURS: (Bar) Sun – Wed, 11am – 10 pm, Thu, 11a.m.–11 pm, Fri–Sat 11 am–Midnight, (Dining) Sun–Thu, 11am–10 pm, Fri–Sat, 11am–Midnight

DINING STYLE: Come as you are **NOISE LEVEL:** Conversational

RECOMMENDATIONS: Cheese Curds, Burgers, Homemade Fries, BLT, Steak & Cheese Sandwich, Broasted Chicken, Saturday Night Ribeye Dinner, Ham Steak Dinner

LIQUOR SERVICE: Full Bar **RESERVATIONS:** No

PRICE RANGE: Lunch: \$3.50 - \$7.50, Dinner: \$3.50 - \$12.75

PAY OPTIONS: Cash, Check, MasterCard and Visa

ACCESSIBILITY: Front Door Only

KIDS POLICY: Friendly, No Menu; High Chairs and Boosters available

CATERING: Yes, **TAKE OUT:** Yes, **DELIVERY:** No, **PARKING:** Large Private Lot

batter prepared with secret ingredients. I have friends who just love the fried chicken because it is cooked under high pressure in a Broaster.

Of course French fries are a big deal in this restaurant and here again you have a choice. There are regular or homemade fries. When you order the homemade ones you get a whole potato.

The pizzas are made from scratch. You choose either thin or thick crust and select from a list of over twelve fresh toppings.

If you are on a tight budget, and who isn't these days, there are Lunch Specials for only \$5.25. Monday and Friday are Cheeseburger and fries days. Tuesday is the BLT and fries day, Wednesday is Hot Ham and Cheese with fries and the Thursday special is Hot Beef with...mashed potatoes (I bet you thought I was going to say fries)! Seriously, though,



this beef special is especially tasty. The beef is roasted eye of round and the gravy is made fresh from the drippings.



Saturday night is especially busy at the 19th Hole. That's because there are Saturday only dinners. Twelve ounce hand cut Ribeye Steaks are grilled to order for \$12.75. The one pound Ham steak is sliced from a whole hickory smoked pit ham and is only \$8.75. A four piece Broasted Chicken dinner is just \$6.75. All of these specials include baked potatoes or French fries, tossed salad or coleslaw and dinner rolls.



Sunday is the day to watch the game on the big screen TV. Since this restaurant has the NFL Ticket you can root for your favorite team while enjoying a large order of BBQ wings for only \$4 or pizza for \$2 off regular prices. Of course there are also special prices on pitchers and cans of beer too.



You know I always recommend you save room for dessert. It's not easy to do here because there are no miniature meals at this 19th Hole. So satisfy your sweet tooth with a really big candy bar. No puny fun size or snack size bars here!

