

Adventures in Dining

By Charles Jenkin
Special to *The Rhinoceros Times*

If you want to have some fun observing human nature, find a restaurant that has just changed its name in the last few days. As I sat in my car before going into a new restaurant that had been another restaurant, I couldn't help but be amused. You could see the change in the facial expressions as several different groups of people approached the restaurant from the parking lot, looked up, and no longer saw the sign that read Midtown Sundries.

It had been replaced with a shiny new sign that says Bull & Barrister Draft House & Grille. Customers walking up to the entrance had the look that said, "Hey, waah happen?" and "Where's my restaurant?" And then they would look at each other, almost stop for a moment, and there would be another expression: "Well, we're already here, might as well go in." I'm sure they're glad they did. The Bull & Barrister Draft House & Grille is a wonderful find for good food and entertainment.

For many years, the big restaurant on the corner of Berkshire Freeway and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road was Midtown Sundries. And it is a big restaurant. The central wrap-around bar seats a couple dozen plus. The tables and booths seat a couple of hundred; and the outdoor patio brings total seating to about 300. And then there's the big screen televisions – all 33 of them. No matter where you're sitting, you can view at least four different screens with four different games, or news, or whatever is going on at that time.

The Draft House portion of Bull & Barrister's moniker is well deserved. They have 18 draft house beers on tap, icy cold and just waiting to be poured, from Amberboc, Bass, Blue Moon (don't forget the orange wedge) and New Castle, to Guinness, Sam Adams and Yuengling. Each month there's a seasonal draft as well. The list of Draft House Bottles is enormous. Don't



see what you want? Ask, and they can probably get it in for you. Of course, there's a respectable wine list, if you're so inclined.

Let's talk food. The menu is varied and extensive. This is a great place to go when you really don't know what you want. It starts with the appetizers and offerings that include Spinach & Crab Dip, Hand Breaded Calamari, Chicken Quesadilla, Stuffed Potato Skins and Home-Fried Chips, just to name a few of the tasty choices.

They also offer House Made Soups, with a selection that changes daily. I had the creamy New England Clam Chowder on my last visit, and it was excellent.

It's always pleasing to see a good selection of entrée-size salads, and Bull & Barrister Draft House & Grille offers plenty of options: Chicken Caesar Salad, Blackened Salmon Caesar Salad, Fajita Salad (steak or chicken), and a Chef Salad. The Big Island Salad is a culinary adventure, with an oriental-glazed chicken breast served over a crisp romaine and iceberg mix with cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, cheddar and jack cheese, pineapple chunks, crisp wonton noodles and a ginger sesame dressing. Now that's a salad!

The Bull & Barrister knows that if you're going to serve cold draft beer, you better have some wings to go along with it. Their B & B Ever Famous Jumbo Wings fly to the rescue with a delectable selection of Hot & Spicy, BBQ & Buffalo, Cajun, Bourbon Wings and Teriyaki Wings. Whatever the flavor, they're fried to perfection and finished on the grill – crispy outside and tender and moist inside.

If there's the thought of a big, juicy burger that's been hovering in your brain all day, the Bull & Barrister has you covered. The Bull Burger is a half-pound of ground chuck topped with homemade chili (prepared daily), coleslaw, yellow mustard and chopped onions. Other burger choices include a Mushroom Swiss

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Charles Jenkin ho
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Burger, Classic American, Hickory Jack and a Panther Black & Bleu. They even have Sweet Potato Fries as one of the side choices.

Specialty Sandwiches abound, as in a Classic Rueben, a Chicken Parmesan and a Portobello Mozzarella, to name a few. Add 16 more choices from the lists of pastas, steaks, pork, chicken and seafood, and it's easy to see why some customers make more than one trip during the same week.

Some of the favorite entrees include Shrimp Scampi Fettuccini, Pretzel Encrusted Pork Chop with Mustard Sauce and Grilled Mahi Mahi.

If that's not enough to get your attention, The Bull & Barrister also has live music on Friday and Saturday evenings – the perfect partner to all those wonderful draft beer selections. So, sit back, relax and enjoy the vibes.

Like to play a little pool? You can do that to, as they have a couple of pool tables, along with a Cigar Lounge – the perfect place kick back with your beverage of choice, watch a game on the big screen and puff away; and, no will give you a sideways look.

Bull & Barrister Draft House & Grille is located at Mountain Island Lake just off of I-485 on Mount Holly-Huntersville Road at Brookshire Boulevard. They are open seven days from 11 a.m., and on Fridays and Saturdays the fun continues until 2 a.m. Prices are very reasonable, with almost everything around \$8, and dinners around \$12. It's all at www.bullandbarrister.com.

Charles Jenkin hosts This Show 'Is Cookin' every Saturday from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. on WBT-AM 1110 and WBT-FM 99.3



Bull & Barrister Draft House & Grille \$\$\$

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DRAFT HOUSE AND GRILLE

BULL & BARRISTER DRAFT HOUSE AND GRILLE provides an upscale, pub-like atmosphere that boasts a large menu including steak, seafood and pasta dishes sure to satisfy anyone's taste buds. With 33 televisions, 18 beers on tap and 36 other bottled beers from which to choose, a unique wine list, pool tables, cigar lounge and an inviting outdoor patio, Bull & Barrister is the fresh new place to enjoy sporting events, acoustic music and neighborly fun. Located at the corner of Hwy 16 and Mount Holly-Huntersville Road near Mountain Island Lake. 704-971-3313.



BRIO brings the pleasures of the Tuscan country villa to the American city. The Italians built their spacious country villas to escape the pressures of urban life and enjoy "La Dolce Vita" (the good life). The food at Brio is all simply prepared using the finest and freshest ingredients. The menu emphasis is on prime steaks and chops, homemade pasta specialties and flatbreads prepared in an authentic Italian wood-burning oven. Brio's villa-like interior features arched collanades, hand-crafted Italian mosaics, Venetian plaster walls and marble countertops. 4720 Piedmont Row Drive phone: 704-571-4214 - www.brioitalian.com



MANZETTI'S - Established in 1986, Manzetti's has kept true to its beliefs of serving only the best quality ingredients at a real value to its guests. Famous for its thick steaks, Manzetti's Tavern has become a Charlotte tradition. Some of the most enduring items on the menu are the "Fall off the Bone" Baby Back Ribs, which literally fall off the bone with the nudge of the fork, and the Grilled Chicken Salad. Serving lunch and dinner 7 days a week, we are located at 6401 Morrison Blvd. near SouthPark. We accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, Diners Club. We look forward to seeing you soon. ManzettisTavern.com 704-364-9334.



LUPIE'S CAFÉ - Come and enjoy a true home cooked meal at Lupie's Café located in Huntersville at 101-A Old Statesville Road (704-948-3959) or visit their flagship location in uptown Charlotte at 2718 Monroe Road (704-374-1232). Daily lunch and dinner specials range from tender Meatloaf on Mondays to the ever-popular Chicken and Dumplings available on Thursdays. View their complete online menu at www.lupiescafe.com

for cultural integrity and a heavy Mediterranean influence. Only the freshest ingredients are used with an emphasis on locally grown organics. Located just off Carowinds Blvd on Hwy 51N in Fort Mill, SC. Join us for live music every Wednesday and Saturday. Dine under the stars on our patio and have a half-priced signature martini on Tuesday from 6-8pm! www.Passion8Bistro.com 803-802-7455.



NOBLE'S RESTAURANT

NOBLE'S RESTAURANT at Morrocroft takes extraordinary care to use only the finest seasonal, locally grown, organic ingredients. Chef Jim Noble uses preparations that are both simple and refined to allow the inherent flavors of each dish to shine through. In 2007, the restaurant received Wine Enthusiast's Award of Ultimate Distinction for Wine List. Mark a special occasion or simply enjoy an excellent meal in Noble's rustically elegant atmosphere. 6801 Morrison Boulevard chefjimnoble.com



THE CHARLOTTE PALM RESTAURANT offers the ultimate fine-dining experience mixed with the South's notable charm and hospitality. Located in Charlotte's SouthPark neighborhood, The Palm Charlotte is a destination along the brick walkways of the upscale Phillips Place shopping center, an eclectic collection of apparel and gift boutiques, and lies minutes away from SouthPark mall, another premier retail attraction. Uptown Charlotte and its cultural and sporting attractions also are within a short drive. Lunch served weekdays 11:30am-3:00pm 6705-B Phillips Place Court. 704-552-7256.



MERT'S HEART AND SOUL is one of the premier dining destinations in the Carolinas. The restaurant specializes in low country and Gullah favorites, including shrimp and grits, southern fried chicken and award-winning macaroni and cheese. Mert's is located in the heart of Uptown Charlotte at 214 North College Street. Mert's is open for lunch and dinner seven days a week. Brunch is served every Saturday and Sunday from 9AM - 3PM. For more information call 704.342.4222 or visit www.mertscharlotte.com.



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