

OZAUKEE COUNTY TOURISM

# Asking the experts: What is your favorite menu item?

**OZAUKEE COUNTY** — Are you one of those diners who peruses the menu, but can't resist asking the server, just before you order, "What's your go-to favorite?"

We asked this question of some of Ozaukee County's favorite food places, and took it one step further, asking what both their — and their customers' — favorite dishes were.

■ **Bouavanh (Thoy) Schuelke**, owner and chef at **Bamboo Bistro** in Grafton, loves having new visitors to the restaurant. For many people, it is their first experience with Lao and Thai food. One of their customer's favorite dishes is the pad Thai — stir fried rice noodles in a tangy tamarind sauce with vegetables and a choice of protein, topped optionally with peanuts.

"Pad Thai is a popular and familiar choice, but there's so much more to explore on our menu," said Schuelke, who highly recommends the curry dishes to guests who have never tried them, citing the Massaman as a great choice for first-timers. "A lot of people think Thai food is spicy, but the majority of our menu is not. You can always add spice though!"

Schuelke's favorite dish from the menu is the Thai basil salmon — a fresh, hand-cut salmon fillet on a bed of stir fried vegetables in Bamboo Bistro's secret Thai basil sauce. "Salmon is one of my favorite fish," Schuelke said, "and Thai basil is one of my favorite herbs. This dish is savory and delicious."

■ Just up the road from Bamboo Bistro is **The Stillery Grafton**, a second location for the popular restaurant. The Grafton location has a more modern feel than the Richfield location, but still has the same great food (from rotating monthly specials to homemade pizzas, juicy burgers, wings, salads and fish fries) and cocktails customers have come to know and love.

General Manager **Tim Goetzke**'s personal favorite off the menu is the Stillery burger, which is a half-pound patty with bacon, pepper jack cheese and haystack onion strings topped with Stillery sauce and served on a pretzel bun.

"It's the freshest, juiciest, never-frozen burger you will ever have," said Goetzke.

He said the guest favorite is the blackened chicken salad, one of the most unique salads you can have in Ozaukee County. It is a blackened chicken breast on a bed of crisp romaine lettuce with house-made pico de gallo, a signature cheese blend, avocado and cucumbers, topped with crispy tortilla strips and served with a side of chipotle ranch.

"The combination of spices on the blackened chicken with the house made chipotle ranch and the fresh veggies makes this a must-try," Goetzke said.

■ **Eli Acosta**, owner of **That Taco Guy Food Truck**, which serves delicious food based on family recipes and flavors, joked that his favorite dish changes weekly because he's eating off the menu pretty much exclusively for six months out of the year.

"However, if I had to choose," Acosta said, "I would choose the Scornie Taco with rice and beans. The Scornie is when we put chihuahua cheese directly on the grill so it melts and caramelizes, then we add the tortilla, flip it and build it."

His customers' go-to favorite? "Our steak taco is the most popular item. However, the



Top, Beanie's fajitas are a customer favorite. Above, the Union House Cedarburg's pesto steak crostini has captured the hearts of guests.

off-menu favorite is the bad a\*\* burrito," he said. "We make a Scornie burrito with all three meats, rice, beans, cotija cheese, Mexican corn with the elotes sauce, our signature beer cheese, crushed chips, and shredded cabbage. It's also delicious with our Texas Candy — candied jalapenos that are sweet and spicy. They go great on everything."

■ **Kyote's Bar & Grill** in Belgium is a popular sports bar with indoor volleyball courts, offering great food, cold beer and good times — all served up in a welcoming, laid-back atmosphere that feels like home.

Owner **Kyle Simpson** says his customers' favorite dish is the tater tot poutine — tater tots, cheese curds, brown chicken gravy and onions.

"It's huge and delicious," he said. Simpson's go-to favorite is the big country burger:

"Double patty, double bacon, double cheese, 1/4 hot dog and a fried egg," he describes. "I love it because it takes me back to my younger days and it's a homage to one of my favorite bars back in the day."

■ **Becky Brolin** is owner of **The Daily Dose** in Cedarburg, which offers cold pressed juice, delicious fresh ingredient smoothies, smoothie bowls, coffee, toasts and small bites. The Cedarburg location opened in late 2023, and is a great spot to meet up for a casual lunch or a healthy treat.

"My favorite," Brolin said, "is the combo of avocado toast and a protein power bowl. I get the loaded avocado toast which is topped with

tomato, cucumber, micro greens and house made pickled onions. My protein bowl base is cacao, peanut butter, banana and almond milk, topped with gluten free granola, coconut, banana, choco chips, honey and peanut butter drizzle.

"Our number one seller is the black rifle brew — cold brew, coffee grounds, banana, vanilla, agave, peanut butter (or almond butter) with a scoop of chocolate protein," she said. "Our number one juice is the rise & shine: oranges, pineapple, carrots, lemon, ginger and turmeric. It's delicious, and great for allergies & inflammation."

■ **BJ Homayouni** is owner of the **Union House Cedarburg**, a premier handcrafted cocktail bar and tapas restaurant known for its vibrant and welcoming atmosphere, skilled mixologists and the joy of small plates and shared dining.

Homayouni's favorite dish is the yellowfin tuna, which is lightly seared and infused with a house-made marinade that combines the rich flavors of sesame seed oil, soy sauce, sesame seeds, soy garlic aioli and ginger.

"It's not only light and refreshing but also made from high-quality ingredients," Homayouni said. "The delightful marinade enhances the savory profile, making every bite a truly delicious experience."

"Our pesto steak crostini, the inaugural item on our menu, has captured the hearts of our guests since day one. This dish features perfectly cooked flank steak, served atop a crostini with a mix of creamy goat cheese and cream cheese. We finish it with pesto and a sprinkle of

red pepper flakes, making it a harmonious blend of flavors."

■ **Beanies Mexican Restaurant** has longtime "roots" in Port Washington — established in 1989 as a family-friendly restaurant with a fun and festive atmosphere, it is one of the few restaurants that invites guests to literally swing from an indoor tree, which is at the heart of their full mosaic bar.

When choosing from the menu, owner **Madeline Binsfeld** switches between the homemade tamales and the chipotle steak tacos.

"It's hard for anyone to choose a favorite," she said. "Even me! I know a few of our customers' favorites are our fajitas, Cochinita pibil (pork marinated in banana leaves) and the fiesta tacos. For Taco Tuesday they love the all-you-can eat taco deal and \$7 grande margaritas!"

■ **David Joe**, Director of Food and Beverage at **The Beacon Restaurant & Bar** in Port Washington, a hidden gem inside the Harborview Hotel with views overlooking the iconic art deco light-house, marina and Lake Michigan. The restaurant is known for its local charm.

Joe offered "The S.O.S." as his favorite breakfast menu item, made with local Bernie's ground beef, seasoned gravy, and two pieces of toast.

"This is a dish that brings back so many memories for our service members," he said.

His favorite lunch item is the Beacon Burger, made with two burgers, cheddar and smoked gouda, topped with local Bernie's bacon, two onion rings, a signature



Photos courtesy of Ozaukee County Tourism Council  
Top, The Beacon Restaurant & Bar's Beacon burger is made with two patties, Bernie's bacon, cheddar, smoked gouda and topped with two onion rings. Above, pictured is Bamboo Bistro's Thai basil salmon.

beacon sauce and served with French fries.

"It is so big we need to hold it together with a steak knife," Joe added.

As for a customer favorite, Joe said, "We added our "Sitting on the Perch of the Bay" sandwich and it has become an instant favorite. You know while they're enjoying the breaded fried perch sandwich with lettuce, tomato, house-made tartar sauce and French fries, they're singing the song in their head."

■ **Fork & Tap** in Port Washington offers "elevated comfort food serving Wisconsin crafts and spirits overlooking Lake Michigan," said owner **Slobhan Mesenbourg**.

"My personal favorite dish would be our DYL (named after our nephew Dylan)," said Mesenbourg. "It is served on our signature flatbread, topped with pulled rotisserie chicken, crispy jalapeno and finished with our house made pickles and aioli. I always have to add our hand cut fries and have an extra side of aioli for dipping."

As for the restaurant's customers, "It is a toss up of a few different sandwiches as well as our reuben fries," she said. "But people really run for the ever-changing cheese-cakes."

■ If you haven't been to the new location of **Inventor's Brewpub** on the Port Wash-

ington marina, you're missing out. It's just 10 feet from the water, with amazing views of the lively marina and Lake Michigan from the theater-like bar and big friendly tables. The pub offers a large menu, plus a rotating beer selection with seasonal picks and one-off batches, as well as house-made craft sodas.

According to General Manager **Cameron Huck**, Inventor's Brewpub's customer favorite is the fried chicken sandwich — a juicy and perfectly seasoned crispy chicken sandwich with lettuce, tomato, onion topped with a chipotle aioli on a toasted brioche bun.

Huck's personal favorite is the Western burger — a never-frozen patty perfectly seasoned with Cajun spices, pepper jack cheese and onion strings topped with BBQ on a brioche bun.

"Sideshow fries are a must," he added. For information about these and other Ozaukee County establishments, visit [OzaukeeTourism.com](http://OzaukeeTourism.com), or follow Ozaukee County Tourism on Facebook. Thanks for being a tourist in your own county!

(The Ozaukee County Tourism Council is a group of businesses and organizations that support and promote tourism in Ozaukee County.)