

July 10, 2018

DUTCH & DOC'S

3600 N. Clark St.

773-360-0207

Wrigleyville (or as I call it: Wrigleyland)

4 diners at 6 pm

cuisine: Sandwiches, pasta, steaks

Opened: 5.24.18

Owner: Boka Restaurant Group

Chef: Chris Pandel oversees the menu

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Where, oh where, is Chicago's beloved, historically grungy Wrigleyville?

THE PLACE

Another bi-level restaurant. Bright and airy; friendly and cheerful. Typically noisy with a blaring soundtrack. Generally unremarkable looking. Crate and Barrel-ish. New and spiffy, in a template sort of way. Plate rims have a lattice design. I feel as though I'm in Harbor Country. The Disney-fication of Wrigleyville. This block of Wrigley, directly across from the ballpark is anchored by new construction and the Hotel Zachary.

THE MENU

The ultimate amalgamation of new American comfort food, such as corn fritters, patty melt, and fried chicken, counterbalanced by newly minted cauliflower toast, tuna niçoise, and quinoa + kale.

And don't forget the de rigueur steaks: NY strip and a bone-in rib eye.

It's all so carefully produced for Wrigleyland, the hip new ballpark neighborhood in the city. It's just so comfortably cool.

THE SERVICE

I am known to management here, so service comments do not apply. That said, we loved Brian. This is his first waitstaff job, and he's a natural. Brian just left the business world and seems happier than most proverbial clams.

THE MEAL

Snacks

Deviled eggs \$3/each

German potato salad, bacon, pickled mustard seed

We order two eggs, four halves. Despite the feisty description, they were pretty bland. I recently had much better deviled eggs, priced at \$1/each, at Amy Morton's Found in Evanston.

Crispy pork ribs \$12

Sticky soy glaze, chiles, cilantro, mint

Clearly on the menu to cover the pop-Asian market, these ribs were crazy over-sauced and not the least bit crispy.

Starters

Hummus with tabbouleh \$10

Marinated zucchini, pine nuts, mint, pita

On the Middle Eastern front, we went for a hummus/tabbouleh combo with the required pita bread for dipping. No personality. The grocery brand Sabra has more zing.

Cauliflower toast \$13

Whipped ricotta, apple, almond vinaigrette

Busy and cute. I thought this was going to be fresh cauliflower, cooked, mashed, and spiced to a tasty spread. No such luck. It was a salad. Why wasn't it listed under salads? I might have enjoyed it had I wanted a cauliflower salad, although, even at that, it was a bit of a hodgepodge.

Sandwiches

Fried chicken sandwich \$14

Bacon ranch, sriracha pickles

Came with french fries. Fried chicken can be had as a main course or as a sandwich. Being near the ballpark—even on a night when there was no game—a sandwich seemed right. We checked with the waiter about white and/or dark meat choices. All dark meat. Plate or sandwich. The fries were below average (not very potato-y tasting) and the chicken was lost to the bun, the toppings, and

the breading. Could barely taste any chicken. And what you could taste was tough and dry. Come on, guys.

Mains

Fish + chips \$18

Tartar sauce, lemon

Also came with fries. Same fries as with the chicken, a cup of coleslaw, and three chunks of fried cod. (Fish was not specified on the menu, but I assume it was cod.) **This was the best dish**. It **just was what it was supposed to be**. The fish was thick and reasonably moist and the crisp breading was tempurlike. A satisfying cliché.

Steaks (choice of side salad or fries; all steaks served with béarnaise sauce and steak butter)

10 Oz skirt steak \$31

The menu said “salad or fries.” We requested **onion rings as a swap out**. No problem. And the rings, which came with a horseradish dip, were **far superior to the fries**. Crisp rings that offered satisfying crunch and onion flavor with every bite. Skirt steak came cut in five thickly cut strips, rare as ordered. We said “yes,” to the steak butter on top and the béarnaise on the side. **Steak butter here must mean triple-salted butter**. Too bad, because, under the overwhelmingly salty topping, the steak had real potential.

Salads

Watermelon + tomato \$14

Basil, stracciatella, pickled red onion

Seems that stracciatella is on the march. Vying for supremacy over Burrata? This salad was **a lovely summertime plate**.

Desserts

Warm peach crisp \$6

And crumble, spiced peaches

Loads of crumble on the top; not many peach slices. Seemed on a par with packaged goods.

Strawberry shortcake \$5

House-made cool whip, cream scones, strawberry jam

My personal fave amongst the desserts. Shortcake was represented by cookie sized– and shaped–scones. All the desserts were American homey, but this delightful concoction rose above the crowd.

Soft serve \$4

There was a long list of add-ons (chocolate sauce, caramel sauce, brownie bites, sprinkles, more) for \$1 each. Is this supposed to bring the meal back to a ballpark food experience? Very ordinary and could get expensive.

THOUGHTS

I don't get Dutch & Doc's. Is it trying to cover all the, uh, bases?

I say, either go for **elevated comfort food or be the Millennials go-to by the park.** This is nobody's best game. Good drinks, though.

As for me: Buy me some peanuts and Crackerjacks . . .