



Hopkins Icehouse Offers a Distinctive Atmosphere and Great Food



by ROB ROEDEL

After considering opening a restaurant for many years, George Dodson and David Jones purchased Texarkana's former Hopkins Feed and Seed building in 2007.

The feed and seed store had been an anchor in the town's historic district for 85 years prior to its new life.

The first order of business for Dodson and Jones after purchasing the structure, which was originally a Ford dealership built in the early 1900s, was a complete renovation. During an 18-month process, the entrepreneurs transformed the building into a modern neighborhood establishment. They were careful to preserve original items including a tin ceiling, window transoms, doors and windows.

"Many of the items adorning the walls were gifts from friends

or original to the building," Jones said.

The items include a large photograph of President Richard Nixon bowling in the White House, two blue marlins and the letters from the Hopkins Feed and Seed sign. There are also big screen televisions for watching sporting events.

The menu at Hopkins is as diverse as the decorations with a nice selection of appetizers, salads, original sandwiches, gourmet hot dogs, burgers, pizzas, an attractive dinner menu, desserts and even a Sunday brunch menu. The menu was developed after many taste tests.

"We constantly taste test our food and make changes to ensure that it remains great," Jones said, adding that when developing the menu, he had a concept of what he wanted to develop.

"I hired a cordon bleu chef – a chef trained in the traditions of classical French cuisine – to help develop the menu," he said. "I found a chef that was working in Houston that was originally from the Texarkana area. I knew that I wanted different gourmet sandwiches and different gourmet pizzas. I wanted something more than your run-of-the-mill food. I think we have created a menu that is very appealing and not just your average food."

After sampling items from the menu, I must agree. The "Newton" pizza features chicken, bacon, roasted red peppers, artichoke hearts, cucumbers, avocado, tomatoes and fresh mozzarella cheese with basil gorgonzola cream sauce on a super fresh crust. It was every bit as good as Jones said it would be. The crust was perfect, and the toppings blended perfectly to provide a pizza one couldn't find in other places. There



are eight other specialty pizzas on the menu ranging from the "Classic Margherita" to "The Carnivore."

The chipotle hamburger was the next item to sample. This spicy burger was topped with sautéed mushrooms, chipotle mayonnaise, bacon and habanero cheese with fresh cut French fries. The chipotle mayonnaise and the habanero cheese added just enough



spice to make this a perfect hamburger. The crispy fries were potato-chip-like in that I couldn't eat just one. If you don't like spicy

burgers, don't worry. There are nine other options, including the "Avocado," the "Hopkins Burger" and the "Italian."

Hopkins also serves all-beef Nathan's brand hot dogs on a French roll. The "Hopkins Dog" is on my list to try next time. It is loaded with cheddar cheese, roasted jalapenos, caramelized onions, sun-dried tomatoes, black olives and mustard.

As Jones and I were sampling the entrees, we also enjoyed "Mr. Jones' Misto Tray." This visually appealing appetizer featured goat cheese with strawberries, brie cheese, sliced green apples, smoked gouda cheese, salami, olive tapenade, tomato salad and red grapes served with wonderful flat bread.

A few local residents enjoying lunch during my visit said the bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich was one of their favorite sandwiches.

"The BLT has a lot of bacon that is crisp, and the bread and mayonnaise are very good," said one regular patron. "It is probably one of the best BLTs that I have ever had."





Freshness is paramount at Hopkins.

"We make all of our dressings and sauces," Jones said. "We think you can taste the difference when these are made fresh."

The dinner menu has 16 additional options, from rib-eye steaks to red beans and rice to pork chops.

Dessert offerings include a "Whiskey Brownie" and "Cajun Style Bread Pudding."

The Sunday brunch offers customers even more options, including eggs benedict with five options: traditional, Italian style, Mexican style, California style and "Hot Chick" style. These are served with potatoes. "Brunchers" can also opt for eggs, pancakes, French toast, omelets or a breakfast pizza.

And if the food wasn't enough, Hopkins Ice House offers live music from local and national acts Tuesdays through Saturday evenings.

Hopkins Icehouse

3rd and Wood streets
Downtown Texarkana
870-774-(FEED)
www.HopkinsIcehouse.com

Open Monday through Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m.; Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m.; Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m.; and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

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