



# Springtime in Paris

By **Doug White**  
Photos by Bret Curry



Doug with Grapevine owner, Ken Vines

**Friends and colleagues have expressed their envy with the “Let’s Eat” portion of my job.**

I suppose it is understandable; after all, I do get to travel this wonderful state and sample its finest foods. But it is not all glamour and glitz as I do have other career responsibilities. So imagine the particular hue of green these envious folks had when I regaled them with my recent trip to Paris and the dining experience at its finest eating establishment, The Grapevine Restaurant. Ooh, la la!

We drove the two hours to Paris. That’s right, we traveled by car because the Paris I am talking about is in Arkansas, just below Mt. Magazine, the state’s highest point (alt. 2,753 ft. above sea level) and one of my favorite places on earth (including that snooty country across the pond).

Paris, the county seat of Logan County, is known as “The Gateway to Mt. Magazine.” It boasts one of the most beautiful county courthouses anywhere, and the

community has a rich history. Subiaco Academy (see *Arkansas Living*, Dec. 2011), the Cowie Winery and Arkansas Historic Wine Museum are nearby.

But when in Paris, one must dine. The Grapevine Restaurant obliged and then some. We arrived early on Friday in order to beat the lunch rush and were immediately greeted by the smiling face of Kenneth Vines. Ken and his wife, Lisa, have owned and operated The Grapevine Restaurant since 1991, and after 20 years they have mastered their craft as restaurateurs.

Everything at the restaurant is made from scratch. Everything. Upon being seated, your friendly server (ours was Mary McFarlane, whose smiling face has been pleasing customers for 15 years) brings you a basket of homemade bread and honey butter.

Ken informed our group that The Grapevine’s new menu will be introduced next month, but it is hard to see what could possibly be improved upon with the existing sampling of sandwiches, soups, salads, pasta dishes, burgers, wraps, Mexican dishes, steaks and blue plate specials. If this vast mélange is not enough, daily specials are also offered.

Our group made a valiant attempt at trying a bit of everything (after all, how often does one get to eat lunch in Paris?). Let it be stated at the outset that each and every item on the menu was abso-

lutely outstanding, bordering on perfection.

The soup du jours were unique and quite good. The brown wild rice soup was exceptional, as was the Mexi-

can tortilla soup. The Grapevine is famous for its salads, all freshly made with the finest local produce. The salad dressings are but one example of how this restaurant goes above and beyond the call of duty. They are fresh and homemade. Our personal favorite was the avocado ranch dressing.

Waitress Mary strongly recommended the fish tacos, saying they would be the best we’ve ever had, and we were not disappointed. The fried tilapia was lightly breaded, and the addition of cilantro, lettuce and spicy tartar sauce made this a delightful dish.



**Grapevine’s homemade meals are a treat for any appetite.**

The Grapevine’s burgers are massive, weighing in at a whopping third of a pound. We tried the Bleu Cheeseburger, with bleu cheese dressing and avocado. Hearty and quite good, especially when ac-





accompanied by an order of pomme frites, or as we Americans call them, french fries.

The grilled chicken wrap was a wonderful healthy option. My personal favorite entrée is the West Coast sandwich. It combines smoked turkey with avocado, tomato, bacon and Swiss cheese on grilled sour-dough bread. Tres bien!

After 90 minutes of trying a bit of everything, Mary cajoled us into sampling a few desserts. Our initial reluctance quickly transformed into sheer nirvana after one bite of the bread pudding. It was as good as any bread pudding anywhere.

Space does not allow us to do justice to the rest of the menu. Suffice to say this is one restaurant that deserves a repeat visit. In fact, many of the regulars at The Grapevine told us they dine there multiple times a week. It's easy to see why. From a ser-



vice, ambience and cuisine standpoint, The Grapevine Restaurant is world class good.

*The Grapevine Restaurant is located at 105 E. Walnut St. in Paris. Breakfast is served 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Lunch and dinner are served until 8 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and until 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The restaurant has a banquet room and also caters. 479-963-2413; www.thegrapevinerestaurant.com. Want to know more? Find video interviews, photos, recipes and more at Arkansas Living on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/ArkansasLivingMagazine>. Do you have a restaurant to recommend for Doug? Contact him at [doug.white@aecc.com](mailto:doug.white@aecc.com).*

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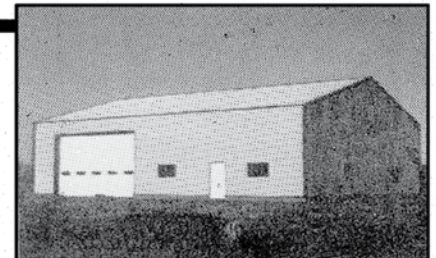


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