



And We're Back

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Greetings friends, readers and fellow "foodies". You know what? You don't even need to be a foodie to appreciate good fare with well balanced flavors.

So, after reviewing Wolfgang Puck's in November, a two week trip to Palestine, and a very crazy holiday season, Chef Drew returns to the culinary destinations and plates of the city's chefs and the pages of [detroitcity.com](#).

BASTONE
419 S. Main Street
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This past week I traveled to BASTONE in Downtown Royal Oak. Now I had been here before, when they first opened in 2004. Let me tell you readers, BASTONE has made many positives, what I would call "upgrades" to both their establishment, and the caliber of food. First, if any of you remember, it was very white inside. No, I am not talking about the customers, but the decor. The first thing I noticed upon the arrival was one white wall, the biggest one, was now painted in a texture of warm reds. There was an immediate warm and welcoming to the space. I also encourage you to visit the basement of this space which has been recently remodeled and now operates under the name of COMMUNE. It has the feel of an old European pub. Excellent job transferring the space.

You will notice that I will just about always describe and critique the space in which I dine. I feel it is truly important that the space is in line with the concept and food. I don't want to eat filet in a coney island dining room, as much as I would not want to eat a coney in a plush red velvet booth. What I am saying is the atmosphere needs to compliment the food and vice-versa. BASTONE nails it! So, without further delay, the food.

THE FOOD

While we were discussing some of the menu changes for BASTONE with David Ritche - Managing Partner, I took some time to browse the lunch menu. There are many lunch places in Royal Oak, but I tell you the uniqueness and creativity of the lunch menu at BASTONE definitely stands out.

The sandwich menu alone provides an opportunity to return several times and enjoy a different dish. For example, the common everyday Patty Melt is "kicked up" with sauteed mushrooms, olives, caramelized onions, and gruyere cheese. Want a new kind of tuna sandwich? They've got it. The Ahi Tuna Melt features poached Ahi tuna blended with artichokes, kalamata olives, red onions and fresh basil in a dijon sauce, with melted fontina cheese on rustic country bread. The Grilled Ham and Cheese is revived by adding white cheddar, apples, and mango chutney. Everything ordinary was given a twist. Even something as simple as the Grilled Cheese was reinvented by adding melted gruyere cheese, caramelized onions, baby pickles, and dijon mustard on multigrain bread. My friends, that was just a few things from the lunch menu.

Men, I have found a salad that we can eat and feel completely secure in our "manliness". Its right here in downtown Royal Oak, and pictured. The Grilled Steak Salad. There is not one piece of lettuce on this plate. What is on the plate is a tender piece of hanger steak cooked to your temperature, fingerling potatoes, roasted mushrooms, roma tomatoes, goat cheese, and a fresh herb vinaigrette.

The items that stood out on the dinner menu were the Macaroni & Cheese Florentine highlighted with spinach and artichoke hearts in a parmesan sauce. Another item that caught my eye was the Herbed Belgium Waffle served with creamed wild mushrooms and leeks. I like the confidence of BASTONE to put this on their menu and I encourage you to try it.

The menu offers a lot of highly creative choices. The chefs at BASTONE definitely have made sure to add unique twists to just about everything on the menu. More examples are thyme brown butter, artichoke tartar sauce, pea-pod-edamame ragu, chopped bacon and green goddess bearnaise sauce, a variety of thin crust pizzas, and even home made soft, hot pretzels.

From a unique Hors d'Oeuvres menu through desserts and even in house crafted beer, BASTONE offers something for everyone, especially those looking for something old favorites with new, bold flavors. Highly recommended.

PS - Keep an eye open for a Brewskies review of Bastones Beers

