

# Personality Plus with a View

## The Waterfront ON BROWNS LAKE

By Barb Emerson,  
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The Waterfront on Browns Lake just outside of Burlington has had many personalities over the years... from teen hangout to supper club. But, the present establishment still plays many roles and does it so well, that you may not even notice as it slips from one personality to the next – and even plays some roles simultaneously.

The Waterfront is a required stop (or should be) for every Browns Lake hoater on sunny summer afternoons, where you can pull up to the dock – there's always room for another, as it's a big dock – to partake of casual refreshment on the open deck.

But, it's also respite from the cold Wisconsin winter, where you can park your snowmobile on the frozen shore and have a hearty repast while warming up and taking part in the camaraderie offered by fellow sledders.

Or, you may find it puts you in mind of a Cheers-type pub where

everyone knows your name. And, if they don't, they soon will.

Oh, but really, with its carefully chosen steaks and fine menu, it's most definitely a supper club.

Whoops. Better wait. Before you go labeling diners' favorite pizza joint with another moniker. After all, it is famous – and justifiably so – in several surrounding counties for its outstanding homemade pizza. (Oooh, that crust!)

Or you may know have been introduced to the Waterfront's banquet hall personality, where you've enjoyed the camaraderie of friends and family for a birthday, anniversary or just plain gathering of a group.

Hum. But, sometimes Waterfront is a nightclub with live entertainment... There's live entertainment nearly every weekend and a Vegas-style show that sells out fast. Make your reservations early!

And, of course we can't leave out its role as a conference center, where many community

organizations meet regularly to partake of refreshment while getting down to business. You'll see Rotary, Kiwanis, the Swift Riders Horse Club, Juycees and several other groups taking advantage of The Waterfront's welcoming demeanor.

Identity crisis? Perhaps. But, no worries, because The Waterfront makes its transitions so gracefully that we hardly notice. In fact, it's the diversity of this Browns Lake landmark that keep diners coming back year after year.

Ah. But, then there's that million-dollar view. Step into the many-window'd Waterfront dining room, and you'll be drawn to the spectacular panorama of Beautiful Browns Lake. Go ahead. Sit near the window, where you can enjoy the lake in any season. October's colors brighten the shoreline. Sails and jet skis decorate summer's months. And, the Fourth's fireworks from this vantage point are not to be missed. Even winter's white coat can't mute the mood of Beautiful Browns.

Waterfront Chef Matt Bennett has a resume brimming with experience in the culinary vein. Since his studies at Johnson and Wales College in Rhode Island, he's held a wide variety of restaurant and culinary positions. A Burlington native, he is well aware of his customers' tastes. His enthusiasm is contagious as he comments that his motto is similar to a certain fast-food restaurant: "Have it your way." Ask for your steak with anything from a Bleu Cheese Cream Sauce (did I hear a yum?) to a Jack Daniels Peppercorn Sauce... (I'll take that one) and mushroom fans will want to try the Sautéed Red Wine Mushrooms over their steak and Matt is happy to comply. A generous pile of haystack onions and you've got a meal with real personality.

Matt's favorite part of being a chef is that he can create traditional dishes with a different twist. And, how's this for a twist? He takes boring old chicken to



Dan Murphy, owner of The Waterfront on Browns Lake greets all his guests with a smile. Dan and Barb Murphy look over ownership of the restaurant in June of 2007.

new heights combining it with a cream sauce made with lemon and freshly ground pepper. And the Chicken Marsala defies the mundane: juicy chicken breast pan fried with and married to a mushroom demi-glaze. A bed of fettuccini rounds out this one.

Matt's quick to answer the "What's your favorite" question with "Ribs!" And, it's definitely unanimous that Waterfront's ribs are the best around. Slow-cooked in a homemade Jack Daniels barbecue sauce... pass those napkins.

But, while the red meat lovers are digging in, seafood fans will feel right at home here. Keeping with the "Have it your way" theme, salmon, tilapia and even walleye can be ordered the way you like best. Blackened Tilapia? You bet. Pan-fried walleye? Coming right up. And get your daily dose of Omega 3's with Salmon – equally as delicious whether it's baked or grilled.

I don't know about you, but I'll take pasta anytime, no matter how it's served. Get yours smothered with creamy Alfredo

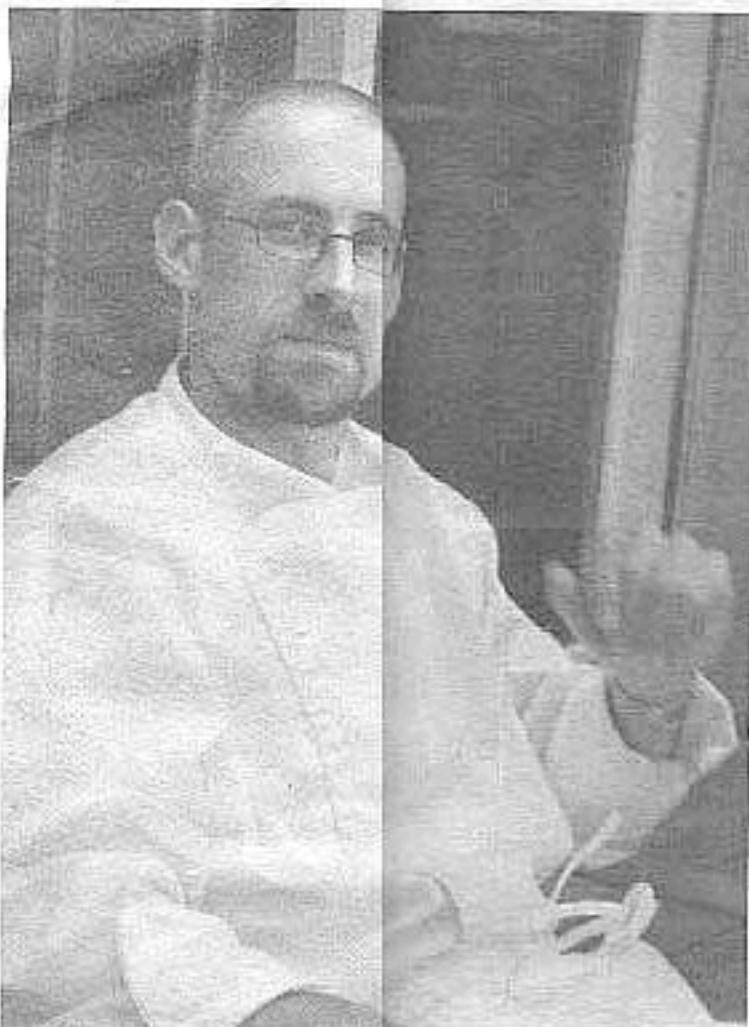
sauce... add chicken or shrimp. The twist? Just enough broccoli for color and flavor. You're up for a little lighter fare, perhaps? Try the Pomodoro de Angeline: Angel hair pasta with another tasty twist: tomato and white wine lemon sauce. Ah, real Italian marinara (homemade, of course) with meatballs, mushrooms or both. Let's eat.

Of course, as if we need to argue about what's the best fare at The Waterfront, I would certainly be remiss if I didn't mention their famous Wisconsin Fish Fry. The perch – fresh from the Great Lakes – is mouthwatering with v-e-r-y light breading. Or try the Icelandic Cod baked (watch that waistline) or fried. Take my advice and choose the potato pancakes as a side... homemade perfection.

Did I mention lunch? What could be more perfect on a summer day than sitting on The Waterfront deck overlooking the water enjoying a burger and fries? In the mood for something a little different? Try this: Grilled Yellow Fin Tuna on tomato foccacia with lemon-basil mayo. Talk about yummy. Or pile up thinly-sliced Prime Rib on a bomber bun and pass that au jus. Who's up for a Meatball Bomber... meatballs buried in that homemade marinara... what are you waiting for?

Waterfront's history is as varied as its present personalities. Long-time locals may remember it as Club 11, where live bands entertained teens throughout the 60's and early 70's and later as Brandy Bay. Dan and Barb Murphy took over ownership in June of 2007. It's apparent that Dan loves his job, as he stands behind the bar and greets his guests as they come and go. (I think he really does know everybody's name.) He's a natural. Except for a few fix-ups, Dan and Barb have no plans to make drastic changes to The Waterfront. After all, it's got so much personality already... what's to improve?

You'll find The Waterfront just off Hwy 11 east of Burlington on the shore of Browns Lake.



Matt Bennett takes a few minutes to talk about his job as chef at The Waterfront.