

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES
MANAGE ACCOUNT | SUBSCRIBE
VIEW E-EDITIONS

ADVERTISEMENT
EnduranceHouse STORE WIDE
BLACK FRIDAY SALE 25% - 50%
 WEEKEND TO WEEKEND SALE: NOV 22 -30 **CLICK HERE**

Opinion

At Bistro Z in Sussex, dining is an experience



The upstairs dining room is accented with colorfully lit trees at Bistro Z in Sussex.

By Sheila Nero Oct. 13, 2015
 Tweet Share 168 EMAIL PRINT 0 COMMENTS

Reflecting a tagline of "it's experiential," Bistro Z reveals itself at second glance, then changes again, depending on the diner's focus.

When entering, customers see the obvious: the white sectional sofa sits across from a wall of birch tree trunks, forming white bookends. Dark elements — deep purple walls and black booths — add drama. The dining room is a combination of organic and industrial elements in a lofty space that's comfortable yet geometric. Industrial metal wall art and pendant light fixtures offset organic touches such as natural stone walls adorned with rustic wooden art.

After a moment, the subtleties start appearing in a quiet, sensory parade. The artificial trees in the upstairs dining room change colors from rose to green to blue. Instrumental music, which sounds softly techno to some, brings alertness. The gently lit menus add a practical glow; Bistro Z's square business cards carry a surprise texture, and the bar features an unusual "frost rail," where drinks receive a chilled effect. The menu offers a depth of flavors; some diners chose to be adventurous samplers and shared small plates.

Owner Craig Pruscha says, "Experiential ties into our philosophy of what we provide: a culinary and aesthetic experience with educated servers that help diners with the experience."

The menu

Choices include large and small plates, sandwiches, soups and snacks, and salads. Bistro Z's presentation is artful, from the asymmetrical soup bowls for the Chilled Corn Chowder to the Grilled Spanish "Red" Prawn with its bed of saffron orzo. Angus "Juicy Lucy" burgers are offered for more traditional diners. Small plate options include Bulgogi Meatballs and Lamb Tartare.

Thi Cao, executive chef, has worked for Wolfgang Puck and Milwaukee chefs Sandy D'Amato and Marc Bianchini, among other training.

The Bourbon Bar offers a wide selection of bourbons and other spirits, along with wines and craft cocktails, including "Hardly the Last Word" and "The Little Pink Number."

Starting Monday, Oct. 20, lunch will be served from 11 a.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Beginning Nov. 1, Bistro Z will be open for Sunday brunch from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The background

A native of Nashotah who earned a master's degree in marketing, Pruscha brought previous new ideas to Lake Country. He's the former president of German Christmas Market in Oconomowoc and also founded Moonlit Movies in Oconomowoc.

Pruscha, who sold an orthopedic surgical distributorship in 2012, next followed an entertainment path and trained at the Second City comedy school in Chicago. Although he's no longer affiliated with Second City, he's developed work as a comedian for years.

The tables

Booths for larger parties are shaped like a "C," giving a nightclub effect. At a recent 6 p.m. dinner on a Saturday, diners dressed casually in jeans and black ensembles. Customers seemed to appreciate the gently lit menus and dinner checks.

Walk-ins of up to 12 and reservations for parties of 30 can be accommodated. The entire restaurant can be rented on closed days.

Restaurant Scout profiles Lake Country restaurants to describe ambience, cuisine, price range and clientele. This is a destination feature rather than a food review. Send questions or comments to restaurantscout@gmail.com.

Good to know

- Bistro Z**
- Website:** www.thebistroz.com
- Address:** W249 N5267 Executive Drive, Sussex
- Phone:** (262) 820-8500
- Fare:** Casual fine dining
- Reservations:** Recommended
- Price range:** \$6, fried nuts and marinated olives; \$14, salmon burger; \$25, Mediterranean swordfish; \$38, 25-day aged New York strip
- Hours:** Bar opens at 4 p.m. Dinner: 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, until 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Closed Sundays and Mondays.
- Wheelchair access:** Yes
- Gluten-free options:** Yes

Commenting Policy

We welcome reader discussion but strive to keep things civil. Please see our [discussion guidelines](#) and [terms of use](#) for more information. If you see a comment that violates our guidelines, please flag it for review. If you have any other issues with our commenting system, please [let us know](#).

0 Comments

powered by: **viafoura**

Please login to comment.

Upload video Upload image

There are no comments yet.

More from Opinion

- ▶ **Bald Facts: Nov. 25, 2015**
- ▶ **Pages from the Past, Nov. 25, 2015**
- ▶ **Retrospect, Nov. 25, 2015: Play gets bumped from Community Hall**
- ▶ **What invasive plant species grow in Hartland Marsh? (1)**
- ▶ **Oconomowoc's Kiwanis elves again bring Santa and parade to downtown**
- ▶ **Mukwonago Chief Letters to the Editor: Library's restructuring plan**
- ▶ **Erect a cable and save a life (1)**
- ▶ **NaNoWriMo**
- ▶ **Talk of the Town, Nov. 17, 2015 (1)**
- ▶ **Why I am thanking the Packers**

ADVERTISEMENT
Assisted Living made safe & supportive
 Daily activities & events
 Health & Wellness program
 Spacious 1 & 2 bedroom apartments with 24 hr. personal care
Lake Country Landing
 AN ASSISTED SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

ADVERTISEMENT
Fox Bros. piggly wiggly
 PIG WEEKLY SPECIALS

ADVERTISEMENT
GET UP TO \$2,700
 on a new Lennox® system
 Call Kettle Moraine Heating & A/C today at 262-968-9751

ADVERTISEMENT
REEL WORLD
 Movie reviews from Lake Country staffers

ADVERTISEMENT
Buying or Selling?
 We can help...
 CLICK HERE for a FREE market analysis!
Dales HOME SELLING TEAM
 DalesTeam.com • (262) 369-8929

ADVERTISEMENT
Tobin's Current Sales Events
 Gifts • Fashion • Jewelry • Cosmetics & More!

ADVERTISEMENT
Order today for Thanksgiving!
 WE'RE OPEN & DELIVERING!

Edible ARRANGEMENTS
*See store(s) for details.

Add credibility to your online business!
SSL Certificates