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Lake Country Reporter

Cornerstone Restaurant in Genesee Depot offers a home for many tastes



The Cornerstone Restaurant in Genesee Depot opened in 2005. Photo By Submitted

By Sheila Nero

May 15, 2015

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The Cornerstone Restaurant in Genesee Depot has a comfortable feel to it, from its cushioned booths to its Saturday night music to its bakery case.

"The Cornerstone name just sounded right to me and I liked the feel of Genesee Depot," she said.

Knoernschild recalls, "When we opened, I knew that I wanted a place that would be considered a 'neighborhood restaurant,' a place where people would want to come regularly. And I want Cornerstone to be an easy place to go to."

So the doors are open seven days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The wide-ranging menu offers butternut squash ravioli and sunflower chopped salad for vegetarians and vegans and also meaty standards like a pot roast dinner and half-pound Angus prime steak burger.

"It has always been important to me that every person who walks in the door can find something they like to eat," Knoernschild said. "We serve food for people who don't like fish on Fridays, but whose husband or wife does. And, in Waukesha County, there's a need to offer vegan selections and gluten-free dishes."

The menu

Knoernschild is the driving force behind the menu creation and recipes. Currently under development: a vegan black bean-quinoa burger and macaroni and cheese with bacon.

Knoernschild's summer goals include bringing in more local and Wisconsin products, more organic and sustainably farmed foods and more vegetarian and vegan items.

"We're a budding restaurant for a few farm-to-table efforts," she said. "I have a local tomato and zucchini supplier. I found a farmer this year for a variety of summer produce and organic free-range eggs. I get local herbs."

The background

Knoernschild worked in restaurants while at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she earned a business degree and didn't plan on a career as a restaurant owner.

"I was a restaurant manager in a temporary spot that has turned into forever," she said.

Francisco Ramirez, one of her chefs, has partial ownership of Cornerstone.

"I learned cooking by reading and doing," Knoernschild said. "I have a really good knack for reading a recipe and knowing if it will work with our price point. I start out with a good idea of the production end of it."

Knoernschild believes in the power of word-of-mouth advertising.

"When you're not next to a shopping mall or movie theater, you don't always know what your mix is going to be," she said. "It's about establishing relationships. A lot of customers come in to talk and have conversations; it's great."

The tables

Customers include couples, family groups, tourists from Ten Chimneys and employees from nearby businesses. Parties of up to 30 people can be accommodated. This month, catering focuses on special events, including graduation parties.

On most Saturday nights, music is offered from 6 to 9 p.m. Peter Donalds plays acoustic 1960s-90s music on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month while Tis, an Irish group, usually plays the third Saturday.

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

Cornerstone Restaurant

Address: S43 W31343 Highway 83, Genesee Depot

Phone: (262) 968-3093

Fare: American bistro with nods to vegan and vegetarian

Reservations: Recommended for groups of five or more

Prices: \$6.75 for a veggie wrap up to \$27 for a 12-ounce, parm-crust New York strip steak.

Hours: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

Wheelchair access: Yes

Gluten-free options: Yes

Website: www.cornerstonegeneseedepot.com

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Weekend Happenings

Featured this week:

- King Solomon: 6:30 p.m. May 30, SummerStage, Highway C, one mile south of I-94 in Lapham Peak Park, Delafield. Party in the Park. Features King Solomon and De La Buena reggae and salsa.
Oconomowoc High School Super Showcase: 7 p.m. May 30, Oconomowoc Arts Center, 641 East Forest Street, Oconomowoc.
Spring Fling Rummage Sale: 8:30 a.m. May 30, Merton Primary School, N68 W28460 Sussex Road, Merton.
Yellow Brick Road Run/Walk: 6:30 a.m. May 30, Fowler Park, 500 Oakwood Ave., Oconomowoc.

Updates to this calendar are made weekly Monday afternoon.

All weekend happenings

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