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Lake Country Reporter

Irish roots run deep at The Pub in Oconomowoc



An Irish canvas-skinned boat, or curragh, rests above the tables at the Pub in Oconomowoc. Photo By Sheila Nero

By Sheila Nero

March 17, 2015

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When The Pub's owners, Aelred and Bernie Gannon of Delafield, moved from Ireland to the United States in 1989, they brought their hometown heritage with them. The authentic décor at The Pub, 114 N. Main St., Oconomowoc, reflects their family roots in Sligo, Ireland.

In the airy dining room, four "snugs," or alcoves, offer privacy for diners and also tell a story apiece. Each features a quaint sign — undertaker, grocer, fish store and hotel — and each snug is a Sligo namesake. Bernie's father was Sligo's undertaker and local alderman. Aelred's great-grandfather owned McLynn Bar and Grocery; his parents operated Gannon's Fish Store. The hotel snug honors a friend's establishment.

The atmosphere

To some, it's a novelty that The Pub is "unplugged," with no TV or video games. Comfortable conversations blend while traditional Irish music plays in the background. Irish artifacts and personal photos add variety and a poetry verse by William Butler Yeats, who spent ample time with relatives in Sligo, is painted on the wall by the bar.

A curragh, an Irish fishing boat with a canvas skin, holds a place of honor in the dining room. Built by Rick Brown, an Oconomowoc friend, the curragh had a voyage on Lac La Belle before it was installed in The Pub.

The menu

Customers can expect favorite dishes such as Irish lamb stew, roasted beet salad and the Pub's bestseller: Shepherds Pie. For those who want a pint, there's Guinness Stout on tap, along with Harp Lager, Smithwick's Red Ale and Murphy's Stout, plus a full bar.

Beyond the expected, a cheese list offers 19 varieties, with most from local producers including Koepke Family Farms in the town of Oconomowoc.

The Gannons use local suppliers for lamb, grass-fed beef and vegetables, too. Bernie Gannon said, "During the summer, most of our vegetables come from the weekly farmers market in Oconomowoc. We also get produce from Serenity Farms."

A few times a year, including the Sunday before St. Patrick's Day, The Pub offers an Irish breakfast. Diners who missed that one can plan on the Mother's Day breakfast, coming up soon.

The background

In Lake County, before opening The Pub, Aelred managed Carpenter's Pub in Delafield (now closed) for eight years. Bernie hosted and waited tables at the restaurant at Highway C and Wells Street.

In 2001, the Gannons opened The Pub, which is in an 1891 building half a block south of City Beach on Lac La Belle.

The tables

On a recent Thursday night, couples and groups of four were at the tables and snugs. Jeans and sweaters were the unanimous choice. Bernie mentioned that customers feel comfortable coming in to eat solo and several couples dating online have set up their first face-to-face meeting at The Pub.

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.

The Pub

Address: 114 N. Main St., Oconomowoc

Phone: (262) 567-8850

Fare: Irish

Reservations: Recommended, especially for a snug

Hours: 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Bar opens at 4 p.m.

Price range: Daily specials range from \$6.50 to \$28. The regular menu starts from a single Cod Cake for \$7.50 up to a 12-ounce beef filet for \$32. The cheese plates range from \$8.50 to \$18.50

Wheelchair access: Yes

Gluten-free options: By request; also gluten-free beers

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Weekend Happenings

Featured this week:

Family Movie Night: 6 p.m. April 25, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Parish Center, W314 N7462 Highway 83, North Lake. The movie "Bambi" will start at 6 p.m. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Free hot dogs and snacks. Children must be accompanied by a parent. Come in comfy clothes and bring a blanket to relax with. RSVP to the parish office at (262) 966-2191 or at www.blteresaparish.org

Poetry Open Mic Night: 7 p.m. April 25, Books & Company, 1039 Summit Ave., Oconomowoc. Celebrate Poetry Month with an evening a poetry. Read your own or a favorite poet, or enjoy listening to others. Free.

The Brew City Rockers: 9 p.m. April 24, Burke's Lakeside, 37238 Valley Road, Oconomowoc. The Brew City Rockers are celebrating spring with a party at Burke's Lakeside. Enjoy a fish fry and stay for the party.

Grow Your Own Salad Gardening Class: 10 a.m. April 25, NuGenesis Farm, N68 W33208 County Road K, Oconomowoc. Join the NuGenesis staff to learn to grow your own delicious and healthy salads at home. \$30 recommended donation. www.nugenesisfarm.org

Updates to this calendar are made weekly Monday afternoon.

[All weekend happenings.](#)

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Monday, April 20, 2015

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