

Duffers Sports Pub tees off in East Naples



A new economical place to grab lunch and a beer recently opened in East Naples.

Duffers Sports Pub launched Oct. 20 at Lakewood Country Club, easily accessible on Lakewood Boulevard, which snakes through the Lakewood residential community from U.S. 41 East to Davis Boulevard. The new lunch venue opened to the public in the former location of Bernard's, which closed in March after replacing Amador's on the Green two seasons ago.

Although the poolside restaurant abuts a golf course, it's not in a gated community. The unpretentious restaurant and lounge welcomes golfers as well as the general public.

Lunch selections center around sandwiches and grilled items, most reasonably priced at \$7.99, especially considering that each is accompanied by the choice of a side: cole slaw, fresh fruit, french fries or onion rings.

"The whole menu is \$8 or less," said Chef John Martunas, who co-owns Duffers with his wife, Joanne. "I'm putting out regular sandwiches that would cost 10, 12, 13 dollars elsewhere."

The bargain prices are not an introductory offer, but rather a calculated effort by Martunas to create one of the best lunch deals in town.

“Well, the thing is, like anywhere else you go, now you’re in Naples and everyone thinks it has to be overpriced. But the thing about it is you can do good food for a reasonable price,” he said. “The whole idea of that is let’s keep them coming back.”

Martunas, 63, hails from Boston, where he was raised by his Italian grandparents. He has been a chef and caterer in the Naples area for many years, including at the Hole in the Wall Golf Club, the former Naples Philharmonic Center for the Arts, and Café Italia in North Naples.

He and his wife previously worked at Bert’s Seafood and Chowder House on Fifth Avenue South. Joanne, who also formerly was maître d’ at the Naples Phil, runs the front of the house, while John mans the kitchen.

“Everything’s been redone, repainted,” Martunas said. “We brought in high-top tables and different types of chairs.”

The Martunas are joined at Duffers by bar manager Jackie Carlino, who most recently managed the bar at the former nearby Chrissy’s Courthouse Tavern.



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Duffers bar manager Jackie Carlino, left, and co-owner Joanne Martunas behind the bar at the new sports bar at Lakewood Country Club, 4235 Lakewood Blvd., in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Naples Daily News)

Items from the grill include a New York-style deli pastrami or Reuben, Southern barbecue pork sliders, black Angus or turkey burger, grilled chicken breast or chicken quesadilla, grilled cheese and tuna melt,

and a deep-fried Southern whitefish sandwich, all for \$7.99. Hot dogs also are available for \$3.99, and a chili dog is only a buck more.

Cold sandwich selections are a BLT, junior club, and the 19th Hole Deli sandwich with oven-roasted turkey, stacked ham, chicken salad or egg salad. The small menu also includes New England clam chowder, chili and a variety of salads.

Desserts feature homemade strawberry shortcake and French vanilla ice cream, each only \$3. Draft beers are \$2.50, bottled beers are \$3, and patrons get a burger and beer for \$5 anytime.

Although Duffers doesn't open daily until 10 a.m., Martunas puts out a free Continental breakfast with mini Danish and bagels for golfers teeing off at 7:30 or 8 o'clock.

"It gives them an opportunity to see the place," he said. "It's a huge dining room. It seats 200 people."



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Jordan's After Dark will open in December adjacent to the new Duffers Sports Pub at Lakewood Country Club, 4235 Lakewood Blvd., in East Naples. (Photo: Tim Aten/Naples Daily News)

While the bar side is simply casual for lunch, Martunas plans to start offering casual, upscale dining for dinner and Sunday brunch in December when he debuts Jordan's After Dark Restaurant in the adjacent space. Jordan's will have every dinner priced less than \$20 and will include wine service at tables sporting fresh linens, he said.

"We've already booked 12 different events," Martunas said. "We've put together a really extravagant buffet for Thanksgiving."

Duffers, 4235 Lakewood Blvd., is open for lunch 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. For information, call 239-774-4056.