

SHINDIGS

Enticing atmosphere enhances ambience

By Tessa Castor
Staff reporter

At the corner of 5th and Main sits the trendiest, tastiest place in Winfield.

Shindigs Bar & Grill is undoubtedly one of Winfield's greatest culinary gems. Opened April 18, 2017, Shindigs is located in the old Santa Fe freight house, its rustic décor reminiscent of the building's past – even the tables have railroad spikes in them. With its beer keg urinals in the men's restrooms and a 1957 Chevy bar, Shindigs boasts an atmosphere unlike any other.

I've always been a creature of habit. Once I find something I like on a menu, it's probably likely I'll order it every time I'm there. But Shindigs challenges me on that.

Shindigs' menu features a variety of savory items, including daily soups, macaroni and cheese, a larger-than-you-could-ever-need steak and my favorite, the Hangover Cure hamburger with a side of sweet potato fries.

The Hangover Cure, with American cheese, bacon, an over-easy egg, onion ring and barbecue sauce, is the best burger I've ever had. Once stacked with the traditional lettuce, tomato, onion and pickles, the towering burger is well worth the mess it makes.

No Hangover Cure is complete, however, without the restaurant's thick, soft sweet potato fries. A signature, tangy sauce accompanies the fries, though I prefer Shindigs' smoky barbecue ranch.

I've tried to recreate these sweet potato fries, but to no avail – nothing I've made even comes close to them. In fact, if I think the fries would go perfectly with a home-made meal, I have learned to call in a side or two and pick them up on my way home from Walmart. They are simply too good to pass up.

While I'm not typically an appetizer-orderer, Shindigs challenges that, too.

Once upon a time, the restaurant had Fried Swiss on its menu, large, satisfying cheese sticks, better than any mozzarella stick out there.



Unfortunately, Shindigs pulled this from its menu, though I quickly found something to replace it.

Shindigs' jalapeno poppers are so tempting it's easy to fill up on them well before the meal comes out. With my favorite barbecue ranch sauce, an order of poppers comes with eight rectangular sticks of fried bacon, jalapeno and cheese goodness. No order is ever exactly the same, hinting at Shindigs' always-fresh creations. Like the fries, I've ordered only the poppers before, letting them be my meal more than once.

Not only does Shindigs have a full menu of full-flavored food, it also supports Builder athletics through marketing partnerships. Shindigs hosts Curt Caden, voice of the Moundbuilders, for BuilderSports LIVE, an evening show at Shindigs each Wednesday at 7 p.m. During the show, Caden features athletes and coaches for a 30-minute broadcast. As a partner to the marketing and promotions branch of the athletic department, the restaurant also has giveaways during regular-season sporting events.

Denise Neil, journalist for the Wichita Eagle, called Shindigs a "Kansas dining destination," and there's no question why. Shindigs' one-of-a-kind atmosphere, phenomenal food and great service, both outside and inside its walls, all work together to distinguish it from any potential competitors.

If you're dining in Winfield, you should be dining at Shindigs. It's worth the drive, worth the money and worth the wait.

Tessa Castor is a junior majoring in English. You may email her at tessa.castor@sckans.edu.

HUNTER'S

Cafe dishes large breakfasts daily

By Emily Berry
Staff reporter

The Hunter's Cafe is a dine-in family restaurant located at 1020 Manning in Winfield.

Hunter's offers meals ranging from pancakes and omelets to chicken-fried steak. Their prices are very reasonable for the size of the meals. The atmosphere is very relaxed and quaint, and it makes you want to come back.

The restaurant's interior fits the theme of the restaurant name. It had a cabin feeling and had hunting-themed decorations that were not too overwhelming.

For my most recent visit, I ordered the two-egg breakfast



combo, which consisted of two eggs, a choice of meat, hashbrowns and your choice of toast, biscuit or a small pancake.

My food was out very quickly. The size of the meal exceeded my expectations. The eggs, hashbrowns, bacon and pancake were not too overwhelming in size where I could not finish it.

The eggs were perfectly fried, the bacon did not have a lot of fat and was not too crispy, the hashbrowns were not burnt and the pancake was the perfect size

and was light and fluffy. The staff was very friendly and fast with orders. There were many people eating while I was there, but everyone's orders were taken quickly.

I would give the Hunter's five out of five stars. The food had a great quality and the service was exceptional. I will be back.

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LUCKY STAR

Chinese eatery disappoints

By Shawn Knepper
Staff reporter

Winfield has a variety of restaurants to help hungry college kids get out of the dorms. While we can choose exotic Mexican food from El Maguey to classic American food from Shindigs, we lack restaurants that fully deliver the taste of southeast Asia and China, so when I took a trip to Lucky Star, I was hoping to have a sense of authenticity within the restaurant. By the minute I'd walked through the doors, it was everything less than I'd anticipated.

Walking into the restaurant, there was nothing that really showcased the atmosphere, if there was any atmosphere to present in the first place, unless if you really want all the life sucked out of you. Nothing but a few star-shaped

balloons. Other than that, white as a hospital hallway, although I do have to appreciate the excellent staff being friendly and making sure things were okay.

I did have some eggrolls which surprisingly were one of the things I did enjoy, mostly because I'm a sucker for eggrolls, until I got to the main course.

I ordered orange chicken with a side of steamed rice. The orange chicken was actually not drowned in the sauce, like most places that overuse sauce to death. It was very balanced and brought in a zingy taste. Steamed rice is steamed rice – it's very hard to screw that up – so it was a really good first impression.

The next thing I tried is my favorite combination, beef and broccoli on fried rice. That's when things took a 180-degree turn for

the worst. The dish looked like it was cooked well done, but the beef tasted like it still needed to be cooked more. It was rubbery, like an aged tire that somehow might even taste better than what I had just eaten.

The broccoli and rice was the only thing that was appetizing. Lucky Star really did pull me in with its appetizers and the orange chicken, making up for the lack of atmosphere in the space, but I find some entrees questionable. I'm not saying stay away from it, because chances are you'll have a better experience than I did, but go with your own caution. I'll give Lucky Star a score of three out of five.

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EL MAGUEY

Mexican establishment reigns supreme

By Victoria Lybarger
Staff reporter

It might just look like your regular ol' Mexican restaurant, but El Maguey in Winfield is so much more than that.

I first came to this restaurant a long time ago with my grandpa and have been coming back ever since. My most recent visit was on a Thursday night, and this place was hoppin'. I knew it was busy by how the parking lot looked, but it seemed like it was louder and had more energy than usual. Luckily, my group got a table quickly and started snacking on the complimentary chips and salsa.

El Maguey's chips are warm and crispy. I have quite a hard time stopping



once I've started eating them.

The meal I ordered was off the dinner section on the menu, and it's one of my favorite meals of all-time, arroz con camarones. This is a plate of magic.

This dinner is a mixture of rice, cheese, shrimp and red peppers.

It comes with a side salad and I always order a side of corn tortillas so I can make my own little burritos. I go

about making these little burritos like there's a science behind it. First, I spread salsa on the warm tortilla, then I put on the rice, then the shrimp. To finish up my creation, I sprinkle some

shredded cheese on top that comes from the side salad.

This is a lot of food and costs about \$13 after ordering tortillas on the side. I go back and forth between ordering either this or arroz con pollo. Arroz con pollo is a little cheaper because it has chicken instead of shrimp. Usually, I eat about half of the dish so that I can get two meals out of it because #collegestudentbudget.

No Mexican restaurant has come close to the atmosphere, the energy, the staff and the food at El Maguey.

If you've been to El Maguey before, you've probably heard the loud birthday song they sing and seen the whipped cream to the face that follows. This is just

one example of how funny and inviting the staff is. If you go there often enough like me, they'll more than likely remember your order and your name. If you're lucky, they'll give you a nickname. Mine is simply "Arroz Con Pollo."

If you're in Ark City or Derby and have a craving for El Maguey, they have restaurants there too. I would suggest checking out the restaurant in Winfield if you haven't already, though. They are moving to a new location this summer south of town that isn't as close to the college, so head there before school's out.

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LUIGI'S

Italian restaurant serves fresh cuisine

By Taylor Rodriguez
Staff reporter

Recently, I had the pleasure of partaking in home-style Italian food at Luigi's Italian Restaurant. I opted to order a special offered by the restaurant, as it was my first time ever visiting.

Luigi's is at the corner of Millington and East 9th in Winfield. The exterior is a generic yellow brick building with large windows giving sight into the dining area. The entrances are covered by green, red and white awnings.

The interior is stylish, but not overbearing. There are design elements that are Italian in nature. There are two main seating areas. One is in the front, with four-person booths, and the other is towards the back near the kitchen area. Both are filled with an aroma of roasted garlic, toasted tomato and various other rich smells.

After being greeted warmly by the owner, we were seated in the open booth area. Our server brought our menus and took our drink orders swiftly. Luigi's offers a variety of sodas, wines and other adult beverages. I decided on a glass of ice water as I read through their menu items.

There was a plethora of delicious-sounding food on the menu. Some I knew of, others not so much. I eventually decided on their Tour of Italy special, a combined plate of freshly-boiled fettuccine with alfredo sauce, breaded and baked chicken parmesan served with seasoned tomato sauce and hot, brick oven-baked lasagna. A trinity of delicious sounding Italian dishes.

After a few minutes of waiting, our waiter delivered a basket of rolls to our table. If the rolls were any indication of how the main course was, I knew I was in for a treat. The rolls are

hand-kneaded and taste as if they were baked that very morning. The warm, firm exterior gave way to a fluffy yet the dense interior of flaky, warm bread. Fortunately, the rolls are unlimited, so be sure to get an extra basket if you get the chance.

Another 10 minutes or so passed before our food was delivered. Quite fast for home-style Italian cuisine, I'd say.

My order was stacked with steaming pasta and meats, with portions big enough to fill the average person. After thanking our server, I dug into my food expectantly.

I started with the lasagna, as it was the smallest of the three portions on my plate. To be completely honest, I have never been a fan of lasagna that is prepared with ricotta cheese. My visit to Luigi's has changed that.

They combine the layers of hot, gooey mozzarella, rich meat sauce and firm lasagna noodles in a way

that no layer overbears the other. I used some of the bread rolls to soak up the leftover meat sauce and continued to the next dish.

I decided the fettuccini would be a good contrast to the tomato-laden lasagna. The sauce was of a warm and creamy consistency. An aroma of garlic wafted from my plate as I gathered a forkful of pasta and sauce. The noodles had the perfect combination of salt and firmness to match the alfredo sauce it was paired with. Absolutely delicious.

Last, after taking a moment to let my food settle, was the pile of baked chicken parmesan. The parmesan-topped chicken was enveloped in a golden crust and laid delicately on a bed of warm angel hair pasta and aromatic red sauce. Similar to the bread, the chicken was fresh. Cutting into

the crust revealed a juicy, white interior. Not moments after this I dug into the chicken, leaving nothing behind but a pile of red sauce and parmesan cheese.

Overall, it was a pleasant experience. Not only was the owner kind and hospitable, but he certainly knows his Italian food. The spacious seating and warm service make me feel as if I'm in being served in someone's home. The food is delicious, served in ample portions and certainly cooked with love and skill.

I would seriously recommend going to Luigi's

with friends and family for a pleasant time and good Italian-style cuisine. I would rate Luigi's four out of five stars for quality service, amazing food and fancy decor.

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