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Lochrann's Irish Pub & Eatery

photo by Chris Fritchie

Lochrann's: An Authentic Irish Pub

By Jennifer Nelson

WHEN THE ROMAN EMPIRE built their roads through what are now Europe and the Middle East, travelers began to need refreshment and places to stay. In Great Britain, people opened inns to host these voyagers and offered ale to drink. Over time, these “public houses” scaled back to the more commonly known pub atmosphere, which in Ireland quickly became associated with Guinness Stout. Today, the pub is known as a place for friends and neighbors to relax and enjoy each other's company.

Dave and Deina McNabb have always enjoyed this relaxed, friendly atmosphere of a pub. Their time spent in Massachusetts and Chicago allowed them to understand the importance of a pub to a community. They've seen how a pub can bring people together in an otherwise extremely busy, impersonal world. Of course, Dave's position at Guinness didn't hurt his love of the

pub either. While working there for more than 10 years, his experience in the world of Guinness grew. He visited Ireland several times and even trained with a brew master at Guinness' St. James's Gate Brewery in Dublin.

When Guinness transferred Dave and Deina and their two children to Frisco in 2004, the McNabbs quickly fell in love with the family atmosphere. But there was one problem. They had already moved around a bit with Guinness, so they assumed they would probably not be able to stay in Frisco. That's when they began to consider opening a pub.

“We loved Frisco, but we really missed the atmosphere that a pub brings. And owning a pub is something that Dave has always wanted to do – he and probably every other guy,” laughs Deina. So, after years of planning, the McNabbs followed their dreams and opened Lochrann's Irish Pub and Eatery.

Located in Frisco Square just off Main Street, the outside of the building immediately shouts “pub.” With the Celtic lettering on the green sign, Deina says that's only the beginning of the elaborate lengths they went through to make Lochrann's as authentically Irish as possible.

THE PUB'S DESIGN

They began with the name “Lochrann,” which is Gaelic for “lantern.” While visiting Ireland, the McNabbs noticed the many lanterns and candles at restaurants and pubs. Most towns had a restaurant and pub row that was lined with lanterns and Deina discovered that lanterns were significant in the Irish culture.

“Long ago, anyone who needed shelter or a safe haven could simply look for a house with a lantern hung outside,” said Deina. “The people who hung the lanterns on their house would then provide food or a place to stay to those who needed it. The lanterns would welcome the wandering people.” Eventually, the president of Ireland picked up on this tradition and lit a candle in a tower of the palace to welcome people



*Lochrann's seafood chowder
photo by Chris Fritchie*

Lochrann's Seafood Chowder

- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 c. chopped yellow onions
- 1 c. chopped celery
- 1/2 c. diced carrot
- Salt
- Cayenne pepper
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 tsp, chopped garlic
- 4 c. clam juice
- 3 c. tomatoes
- 1 1/2 lbs. new potatoes, quartered
- 2 c. fresh sweet corn kernels
- 1/2 c. finely chopped fresh parsley
- 4 lbs. raw assorted cleaned shellfish,
(medium shrimp, shucked oysters, crabmeat, diced lobster meat, whole mussels & clams, etc)
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped
fresh parsley leaves

In a large saucepan, over medium heat, add oil. When the oil is hot, stir in the onions, celery and carrots. Season the vegetables with salt, cayenne and bay leaves. Saute for 6 minutes or until the vegetables are soft and tender. Stir in the clam juice and tomatoes and bring to a boil. Add the potatoes and corn. Simmer for 15 minutes or until the potatoes are fork tender. Season the seafood with salt and cayenne. Add the seafood and simmer the soup for 5 minutes. Stir in the parsley and ladle the soup into serving bowls.

provided by Lochrann's Irish Pub & Eatery

back home to Ireland.

"We chose the lantern as the basis for Lochrann's because we want people to know they are always welcome," said Deina. "We hope that even as Frisco grows, it will stay a tight-knit community and people who have left know they are always welcome to come home."

The inside of the pub exudes the traditional Irish feel, too. Keeping with the warm and welcoming theme, the McNabbs decorated with rich colors and materials. The warm gold on the wall and the deep, rich brown in the wood floors add a comforting touch. Of course, the Celtic knot can be found throughout the location, woven into the woodwork, paint and décor. They also decided to bring two traditional designs into the pub. The cottage style can be seen in one corner of the restaurant while the rest feels more like a pub found in Dublin, which is often a Victorian style. As for the materials and craftsmanship, most everything is either from Ireland or created by an Irish craftsman. "We tried as best we could to keep the authenticity," said Dave. "The Irish have a rich history."

Of course one thing that is not lacking here is the Guinness, which is poured to preserve its unique taste. A few other popular drinks include Smithwick's, Harp and Hoegaarden, a Belgian beer. And what goes best with a strong drink? Delicious Irish food created by Chef Troy, whose resume includes whipping up a delicious steak at Nick & Sam's in Uptown. His creations at Lochrann's consist of traditional Irish fare such as fish and chips, a classic Irish stew with a bit of the chef's style thrown in, boxty potato pancakes and shepherd's pie. Of course, he also serves items such as fresh fish, filet mignon, stuffed pork, salads and sandwiches.

THE PUB'S GOOD "CRAIC"

Irish pubs have always been known for

their "craic," fun or light-hearted mischief. Lochrann's is no exception. Diners enjoy live entertainment Thursday through Saturday nights. According to Deina, they "usually stay fairly true to the Irish/Celtic music, but do branch out every now and then."

Sunday at Lochrann's from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. is family day, which the McNabbs thoroughly enjoy. "We have fun entertainment during those hours that the kids absolutely love, including dancers and Irish harp music," said Deina. "The entertainers often love the break from the typical night crowd and really enjoy the kids' interest in what they're doing."

And Lochrann's wouldn't be an Irish pub without an enormous St. Patrick's Day party. The festivities will begin on Wednesday, March 12 with Pugs and Kelly from Live 105.3 broadcasting live from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. On Friday, the 14th, the Kildares, a Celtic rock band, will be live in concert. On Saturday night, diners will enjoy the Texas-based Trinity River Whalers and Red McWilliams, a Celtic soloist, will perform both Saturday and Sunday. Then on Monday, St. Patty's Day, they'll start off right with an Irish breakfast, including bangers and mash, blood sausage, boxty and plenty of Guinness.

THE PUB'S REWARD

Since Lochrann's grand opening in December, 2007, Dave and Deina have enjoyed "introducing the Irish culture to those who may not know much about it and celebrating the culture with those who are already familiar with it. People have really been wonderful and have embraced us," said Deina. "Everyone seems to be having a good time and I'm happy to see that. That's definitely a big reward for us. It's one of our objectives – to see people happy here."

The long-term future of Lochrann's looks bright with Dave's experience and both Dave and Deina's exuberance. For the short term, the McNabb's are expanding Lochrann's to include more seating and a larger stage, planned to be open by summer 2008.

And, as the Irish say, Slainté (or cheers)!

Jennifer Nelson is a freelance writer living in Frisco.