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Colin Boyd performs at Obzeet (left);
Blue Cheese Chips (inset)
photos by Leah Ratliff



gallo. Not a traditional combination, but the flavors work surprisingly well together, making for a tasty appetizer. The

Crunchy Stuffed Olives (\$4.25) and Mexican Dip (\$6.50) are also worth a try.

The House Salad (\$8.25 full/\$6.25 half) is a good version of the standard salad with the welcome addition of avocado. For something a little different, try the Nutty Blue Cheese

Salad (\$8.25) or the Tricolor Salad (\$5.25). The former is mixed greens with walnuts, dried cranberries, and blue cheese. The latter is a pleasing presentation of avocado, mozzarella and tomato served on lettuce.

Obzeet's features a full line-up of standard sandwiches as well as a house specialty known as a Tramezzino. Kind of like a cross between a pita sandwich and a quesadilla, Tramezzinos are pitas stuffed with meat, lots of molten mozzarella and optional toppings such as olives, spinach, mushrooms and artichoke hearts.

The Steak Tramezzino (\$13.50) is big – both halves of a large stuffed pita – and comes with a house salad. I ordered mine loaded up with all the toppings. The steak was tender, tasty and generously portioned. The cheese was abundant – almost too much. I was a little disappointed to see canned mushrooms. They seemed out of place on such an expensive sandwich that aspires to be more than bar food. Overall, the sandwich and salad were good, but with

Obzeet, an Obscure & Funky Nightspot

By Lee Ratliff

OBZEET ALMOST SEEMS to go out of its way to remain obscure. Tucked away on an unlikely patch of Preston just south of SH190, Obzeet doesn't look like much from the outside. To the uninitiated, Obzeet appears to be a simple merchant of patio accessories. For years I drove by its location without realizing that this inconspicuous shop was anything more than a purveyor of chimeneas and yard art. Even after I heard about its restaurant and bar, I still envisioned blue-haired ladies settling in for afternoon tea and cookies, before returning to the shop's stacks of imported furniture, statues and other home décor.

While that scene may well be a regular occurrence, my vision of Obzeet was far from complete. The truth is, Obzeet is also the coolest, funkier nightspot north of I635. No kidding!

Obzeet is like an oasis of funk in the heart of suburbia. Tucked away in the

back the restaurant and "Tropical Bar" occupy two indoor rooms as well as a spacious outdoor deck shaded by large trees. It's nothing fancy, but it's got character. The deck is a sea of tables and chairs split into two sections by a fishpond and reconnected by a wooden bridge. Lots of plants and pink flamingos contribute to the tropical atmosphere. A large outdoor bar serves the deck, while another takes care of indoor patrons. Obzeet features live music almost every night, so a small outdoor stage provides a space for the band. (Entertainment moves inside during inclement weather.)

The menu consists mostly of appetizers, salads and sandwiches. A few pasta dishes are there for those wanting something more.

On a recent visit we started with Chunky Blue Chips (\$5.25) – a basket of thick cut kettle potato chips covered with crumbled blue cheese and pico de



Tramezzinos at Obzeet
photo by Leah Ratliff

of cake (\$5.50), pie (\$5.50) or cheesecake (\$6.00). They have a selection to rival most bakeries and the servings are very large. A favorite is the Coffee Toffee cake with a coffee flavored icing and pieces of crunchy toffee sprinkled on top. A wide variety of espresso drinks are available if you want to double-down on your caffeine consumption.

While Obzeet has a full bar and you can order just about any drink imaginable, you might want to try one of their signature martinis or Obzeetinis (\$7.00) as they are called. About a dozen Obzeetinis are listed on the menu and I haven't had one yet that wasn't good. The Appletini is great with a flavor

similar to a Granny Smith apple. The Mad Hatter combines vodka with Cointreau, cranberry juice and orange juice. Other tasty drinks include the Blue Fly, Bellinitini and Tuscany Tease.

As a restaurant and bar Obzeet gets a passing grade, but the best reason to go is the live music. Many familiar local bands frequent the venue and some have been playing there regularly for years. The usual Obzeet crowd is an eclectic mix of people and the lineup of bands reflect this diversity. Jazz, rock, folk, blues, reggae... the list goes on. If you want to see great live music in a relaxed and casual atmosphere then Obzeet is the place. It's the kind of place where the band hangs out with the patrons between sets, a good song will instantly bring people to their feet to dance in the tiny area in front of the stage, and you're likely to have new friends before you leave.

People just seem to have a lot of fun at Obzeet. So grab your friends, push together a couple of tables on the patio, and sit back for a warm Texas evening of good friends, food, drink and music.

Lee Ratliff is our expert "foodie" and owner of Ambrosia Creamery.

Warm Blue Cheese, Bacon & Garlic Dip

7 slices bacon, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
8 ounces cream cheese, softened
¼ cup half and half
4 oz. blue cheese, crumbled (1 cup)
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
3 tablespoons chopped smoked almonds (1 ounce)

Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat until almost crisp, about 7 minutes. Drain excess fat from skillet. Add garlic and cook until bacon is crisp, about 3 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat cream cheese until smooth. Add half and half and mix until combined. Stir in bacon mixture, blue cheese and chives. Transfer to a 2-cup ovenproof serving dish and cover with foil. Bake until thoroughly heated, about 30 minutes. Sprinkle with chopped almonds. Serve with sliced apples, toasted pita crisps or French bread. May be prepared 1 day in advance. Refrigerate or freeze. Bring to room temperature before baking. Yields 2 cups.

Stop and Smell the Rosemary, Recipes and Traditions to Remember, a cookbook by the Junior League of Houston.



Warm Blue Cheese & Garlic Dip
photo by Chris Johnson

high prices come high expectations and the combo ultimately disappoints as a value. The other Tramezzinos are similarly expensive – even the Veggie Tramezzino is \$10.25.

Try one of their signature martinis or Obzeetinis as they are called. The Appletini is great with a flavor similar to a Granny Smith apple.

Slightly better values are found on the standard sandwich menu. The Ruben (\$10.50) features a pile of pastrami, Swiss cheese and sauerkraut on rye bread with a side of potato salad. The Breakfast Sandwich (\$7.95) can be ordered anytime and consists of turkey, scrambled eggs, cheese and tomatoes served on a croissant.

Desserts really shine at Obzeet. Visit the dessert display case to pick out a piece