

Des Moines Register

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Page: 12DB

At the top of their game

Moranville W.E.

Special to Des Moines Register

This biweekly bit highlights a top-notch feature recently discovered by W.E. Moranville at an area restaurant.

When 7:30 rolled around on a recent Friday night, with no dinner plan in the picture, things didn't look good. (On Fridays, 45-minute waits have a way of turning into an hour and a half the olives in that martini at the bar just don't hold you for long.) We tried our luck at Christopher's like most popular places in town, it was going to be a while.

But they had something a lot of crowded joints didn't have: a comfortable lounge with an extensive bar menu that traveled well beyond burgers and nachos. I figured pros who turn out admirable pasta, seafood and steaks dishes in their dining room would turn out admirable sandwiches, appetizers and pizza in the bar. I was right.

Christophers does a fine pizza pie. Flavorful ingredients, ranging from the traditional to the contemporary, top a good, thin crust. We ordered the Zaun (\$10.95), with fresh mushrooms, Italian sausage, provolone and a zesty tomato sauce that brought a unique sweetness to the mix.

Another night, I enjoyed a top-notch French dip (\$7.95) made with thinly sliced prime rib and served with good, hot fries. It's among the nine sandwiches on the menu, many with interesting touches. Appetizers, including bruschetta, spinach and artichoke dip, Italian chicken livers and toasted ravioli, complete the bar menu.

Christopher's, 2816 Beaver Ave. 274-3694.

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