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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.

HOMEMADE SOUPS AT CHRISTOPHER'S

Settling into a booth at Christopher's recently, I debated between ordering a tossed salad (its creamy garlic dressing is legendary) or a cup of soup. At steakhouse/spaghetti joints, the latter can be a real roll of the dice; after all, how many times have you had a lackluster vegetable beef soup, made with a bunch of leftover beef cuts and long-stewed veggies drained of all color?

Two choices piqued my interest: A New England-style clam chowder (that's the white kind) and a chicken noodle Florentine; among the diners at my table, we tried them both.

No one's sleepwalking through the prep of these soups -they're obviously homemade by someone who takes soup very seriously. The chowder was creamy, sweet and chock-full of clams -rich, but by no means the gloppy stand-your-spoon-in-it mess too many places sling. The chicken noodle Florentine, with bits of colorful, fresh spinach, had a distinct homespun appeal.

Soups rotate daily; on other nights, look for tomatillo, black bean, minestrone, tortellini, smoked chicken with orecchiette (little ear-shaped pasta), and other thoughtful selections that put passion back into this course.

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

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