

LT's Grill a family-friendly experience

By RUTH FANTASIA
Executive features editor

As family dining goes, LT's Grill is one of the better places in the area. It's filling, it's cheap and the menu doesn't consist of burgers, chicken fingers and ice cream.

We didn't have a family with us the night we visited, but we wished we had. Especially when a handsome young man (of about 10 years), brought warm roasted peanuts to the table. The peanuts and a bowl of popcorn are standard pre-dinner munchies at LT's, like chips and salsa are at other places, and we thought the kids would've had fun with the in-shell peanuts.

We followed the starter munchies with a chicken quesadilla (\$6.95), which was served with salsa and sour cream and good as any other we've had.

The menu is divided into five sections: "Little Vittles" are appetizers, "The Pasture" offers salads big and small and "Get a Wiggle On" is a list of 10 sandwiches including everything from brisket on a toasted roll to an open-faced roast turkey sandwich with stuffing and cranberry sauce. Entrees, listed under "The Chuck Wagon," include platters of ribs, steak, brisket, tilapia, chicken and combinations thereof.

What wasn't there was what I wanted, a platter with pulled pork, cornbread and my choice of two sides.

If it's not on the menu, owner L.T. Goldstock says, they'll make it for you, but us diners are a well-trained bunch. You give us a menu, we order from it, we're good little doggies that way.

I settled for "The Big Bubba," pulled pork on a roll with fries (\$7.95). A squarish ciabatta-like roll came piled high with shredded pork coated in a Georgia-style, tomato-based sauce. Alongside were big, burn-your-teeth-hot steak fries and a slice of pickle.

From "The Pasture," my colleague Tracy ordered a "Southern Belle" (\$8.95) the house salad topped with chicken. This big salad, the size of a medium mixing bowl, was full of crisp greens, cucumbers, red onions, carrots, tomatoes, peppers and croutons and made an ample dinner for someone wanting something less filling.

The LT's Grill menu is subtitled "A Touch of Southern Class," but the place feels cafeteria-like. It's a big open room filled with bare tables and wooden chairs and some kitschy decorations like a life-size statue of a cowboy and a cactus, perfect for children who dream of being in the Wild West.

Throughout the evening our server was highly efficient, but she approached with caution, even when speaking to us. I finally decided she'd probably had enough cola spilled on her by kids to teach her to keep her distance, or Tracy and I smelled like heffers.

The dessert special of the evening was a warm apple crisp (\$4.95) and it was just like Mom used to make: seasoned with cinnamon, slightly sweet and with a crunchy topping rich with toasted oats.

Dinner for the two of us, including two glasses of the house merlot and a glass of iced tea, came to \$50.

"Man, this would be a great place to bring the kids," said Tracy as we passed the hostess station adorned with crayons and children's menus. And since then, LT's has become her family's favorite dinner place.

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LT'S Grill 2305 Nott St., St. James Square Niskayuna Phone, 374-7455 Eat in, takeout, catering Average entree: \$14.50; sandwiches and salads, \$8.50 Food: Barbecued pork, ribs, chicken and brisket with all the fixings; beer and wine, no liquor Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, 4 to 10 p.m. Saturday, closed Sunday. Details: Reservations not necessary; fully accessible; major credit cards accepted