

Capital District Parent Pages

January 2014

The Family Chow

adventures in dining across the Capital District

This Rusty Nail shines

With football season in full swing, the Family Chow began our cold weather search for a family friendly, cozy place to grab some food while watching the game. It was Daughter who suggested we try the Rusty Nail in Clifton Park after hearing about it from friends.

The Rusty Nail is one of four taverns owned by local businessman Wayne Beale. Though modest looking from the street, the inside of the “Nail” was divided into a spacious bar area and separate porch/dining room. We were concerned when we saw the bustling parking lot that we would have to wait for a table, but we were greeted and seated promptly. The tavern boasts 22 TVs, tuned to the different games of the evening. While Son and Dad were seated facing several of the game screens, Daughter and Mom were facing a screen tuned to Quick Draw. Daughter noticed the “holiday feel” of the space with various decorations adding to the cozy atmosphere. We also noted that although the bar area was close, the “Nail” felt very family friendly.

Even before we arrived, we had settled on trying some of the Rusty Nail’s “famous” wings. We did peruse the menu and noted many familiar tavern staples. Starters included fried options (\$4-\$12): scallops, mushrooms, onion rings and chicken tenders. There were quesadillas (\$10) and several salads (\$5-\$11). Main courses included more than a dozen sandwich and burger choices (around \$10). Befitting a tavern, there was a good selection of beer including a couple of gluten-free options.

Mom settled on a cherry wheat beer that arrived within minutes in an ice-cold bottle accompanied by an ice-cold glass—nice touch. We took note of the fact that the Nail offers free soda or seltzer for designated drivers (we applaud that policy)! We also decided to begin our wing fest with an order of potato skins (\$7.25). And since Son was forbidden from ordering yet another hamburger, he chose the ham sandwich with fries (\$8.50). For the main event, we settled on 20 wings in two flavors (\$15.95) – the Thai chili and the medium (Buffalo sauce). Other sauce choices included garlic parmesan, sweet heat and Cajun with a rotating sauce of the week.

The potato skins arrived quickly and were a unanimous hit. Not so much skins as “cups,” with a good amount of potato left in the shell and topped with just the right amount of cheese, bacon bits and scallions. They were deep fried then baked to perfection and were accompanied by a side of sour cream. Daughter compared the crunchiness of the skins to her favorite potato chips. They were just enough to whet our appetite for the wings that came next.

We consider ourselves to be amateur wing connoisseurs, having tried the wings at dozens of places including the “mecca” of wing establishments – the Anchor Bar in Buffalo. We found the Rusty Nail wings ranked among our favorites. Just like the potato skins they were fried to perfection – very crunchy and not soggy from the sauce, which was placed more on the plate than on the wings

themselves. The Thai chili sauce was a nice blend of sweet with an after burn of medium heat. The medium sauce was a bit too vinegar-y, and could have used more butter to mellow it out, but was a perfect heat level. The side of fresh carrots and celery sticks with real Blue cheese dressing was a welcome accompaniment.

Son wasn't as happy with his ham sandwich as Dad and Mom, who both thought it looked like something out of a Norman Rockwell painting. Fresh deli ham piled high between thick slices of white bread, with a bit of lettuce and mayonnaise to finish it off. Dad thought it tasted just as good as it looked, although Mom would have preferred Hellman's mayo to the Sysco brand used by the kitchen.

Overall, we loved our experience at the Rusty Nail and would return to enjoy the delicious wings and try some of the other menu options. It was easy to understand why many of the patrons seemed to be regulars. We give the Rusty Nail 3.5C's for service, 3.5 C's for family friendliness and 3.5 C's for food.

The Family Chow hails from the Capital District and contributes regular reviews of area restaurants based on service, food and family friendliness.



Rusty Nail

1781 Route 9, Clifton Park

- **Food – 3.5C's (out of 5)**
- **Service – 3.5 C's**
- **Overall family friendliness – 3.5 C's**

