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Pizza Scene

by Mark Rumreich

It must have been the night for critics – the proprietor of a popular Broad Ripple pizza joint was in the booth across from ours, checking out the competition. He made no negative remarks, which we took to be a good omen.

Although it's new to Indiana, Monical's has been around for over fifty years. The chain is based out of central Illinois and has recently expanded into Hoosier territory. There are six stores in the Indianapolis area, the newest at the Glendale Mall, which opened in January.

The restaurant is easily accessible at the northeast corner of the mall. The atmosphere is modern and uncluttered. Tall-walled booths are arranged in a mazelike pattern making some areas private and others more open for large groups.

Monical's serves sandwiches, salads, pasta and pizza. Some locations serve beer, Glendale being one of them. Monical's is famous for their Sweet & Tart salad dressing, which even has its own Facebook fan page. People use it on salads, wings, sandwiches and even dip their pizza in it.

Signs and menus push the "Family Pleaser" which I first took to be a giant pizza with the works. It's actually a package deal where you add salad and drinks to a family pizza or pasta meal.

Pizza-wise, Monical's offers thin and pan crusts with all the usual toppings and more. We ordered four pizzas to try; a pepperoni and sausage, Hawaiian, margherita and pan-style BBQ chicken.

After a refill of our Pepsi products, our pizzas arrived. The pepperoni and sausage was the star of the show. The thin crust was really crispy, and stayed crispy for the entire meal. The pepperoni and cheese had very good flavor, and the small

chunks of sausage were tasty. The sauce was sparse and somewhat bland, but no matter, the overall concoction scored an A. I'm still thinking about those little square pieces a few days later. The other three pizzas were less impressive. The Hawaiian was overwhelmed with pineapple and the BBQ chicken with BBQ sauce. The margherita (crust brushed in olive oil topped with mozzarella, tomatoes, minced garlic and parmesan) wasn't memorable. But to find one great pizza made the visit worthwhile.

Mark Rumreich has been vigilantly surveying the pizza scene in the Indianapolis area for over two decades. He is an avid home brewer, has written for several magazines, and is the author of the Car Stereo Cookbook. Send comments to mark_rumreich@broadripplegazette.com



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