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RESTAURANT GUIDE

SPRING/SUMMER 2016



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PIZZERIA GRILL** page 5



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FEATURED RESTAURANT

Smoky Mountain Pizzeria Grill

Cheerful, casual restaurant celebrates 24 years



■ Smoky Mountain Pizzeria Grill began as a casual pizza restaurant in Ketchum in 1992 and continues its strong Idaho tradition with more than 20 years now in the Treasure Valley.

It starts when you walk into the rustic, mountain lodge atmosphere. You are immediately greeted with the cheerful personality and aromas of a restaurant that has earned its reputation over the years as much more than just a place to grab a bite to eat.

Along with those who stop in for lunch or dinner, you'll find people celebrating birthdays or anniversaries, you'll see kids creating their own pizza right at the table, banquet rooms are busy with a variety of activities and, in the summertime, the patio is filled with good times and the smell of good food.

While lots of places now feature patios and sidewalk seating, Smoky Mountain Pizzeria Grill was one of the

first restaurants in the area to make patios an essential part of the dining experience. It goes back to the rustic sophistication of that Idaho outdoorsy feel, while still bringing in a sense of contemporary cuisine and menu items that build on those traditions.

"High heels and high chairs are equally welcome," said Smoky Mountain President Dan Todd, who runs the business started by his father and brother almost a quarter century ago. The restaurant's name changed from Smoky Mountain "Pizza and Pasta" about 10 years ago to "Pizzeria Grill" to ensure that the smokiness of its origins would not go unnoticed. (Anyone who has ever visited the Sun Valley area during fire season will understand the "Smoky Mountain" moniker.)

For example, the popular Hearts

On Fire Grilled Chicken Salad features sliced romaine lettuce charred on the grill for a hint of campfire flavor and topped with a marinated chicken breast, balsamic drizzle, bleu cheese, toasted pine nuts and applewood smoked bacon.

"You're not going to find things like this at your average pizza restaurant," Todd said.

And where else will you find Brie Kisses on the appetizer menu? Brie cheese in puff pastry served with a boysenberry-jalapeno jam. The sandwich menu now features the new Ciao'licious Ciabatta Sandwiches with choices like Smoked Turkey Club and Turkey Apple Brie on toasted ciabatta rolls. You might also want to check out the Grilled Salmon Pasta off the Sautéed Pastas menu, or the Chipotle Shrimp and Penne off the Baked Pastas menu.

"I love the nuances of what we do," Todd said. "We strive for layers of flavor in our dishes."

Those menu temptations sit alongside all the traditional casual dining items you expect to find, like burgers, shoestring or garlic Parmesan fries, linguine, lasagna and meatballs. Any good restaurant knows how to stay true to its roots, while also bringing in fresh and exciting foods to keep the menu as lively as its atmosphere.

But let's talk about those Smoky Mountain pizzas. (And, of course, calzones.)

"We absolutely obsess about the quality of our ingredients, like the local cheeses that are made in partnership with our Idaho dairy farmers," Todd said.

"We make fresh dough every day, and we have a Parmesan-baked crust that is uniquely crave-able."

Dough choices include the original hand-tossed, or you can go for the thin & crisp or gluten-free. Choose a traditional tomato sauce or go with basil pesto or creamy garlic. Pick a traditional combination-style pizza or check out the Primavera that has broccoli, zucchini, onions, mushrooms, tomatoes and red and green peppers.

Another good choice is the house special — the Smokehouse Pizza. You'll find an olive oil glaze on the dough with smoked gouda, caramelized red onions, Italian sausage, smoked tomatoes and a blend of yummy cheeses.

"We smoke those tomatoes here in house," he said. That sure makes it one of the tempting toppings from a list of more than 30 choices.

Kids have the option of making their own pizza at their table, which is then served in a Frisbee-like flying disc.

Smoky Mountain Pizzeria Grill has been such a popular feature in communities over the years that Todd sees many parents who came as a kid and are now bringing their own kids to experience the fun of pizza and patio dining.

"We want to create a family experience instead of people standing in line," he said. "But it's also about our great staff that treats everyone as friends and family. That sets us apart."

Despite the many compliments about the ever-cheerful and helpful service staff, it still comes back to how good the food is every day at Smoky Mountain Pizzeria Grill.

"We get a lot of that," Todd said.

Smoky Mountain Pizzeria Grill

Five locations in the Treasure Valley.

BOISE — 1805 W. State St. (208) 387-2727

BOISE — 415 E. Parkcenter Blvd. (208) 429-0011

EAGLE — 127 E. State St. (208) 939-0212

MERIDIAN — 980 E. Fairview Ave. (208) 884-1067

NAMPA — 2007 N. Cassia St. (near Edwards Theaters) (208) 461-7333

MOUNTAIN HOME — 1465 American Legion Blvd. (208) 587-2840

KETCHUM — 200 Sun Valley Rd. (208) 622-5625

MOSCOW — 1838 W. Pullman Rd. (Palouse Mall) (208) 892-8000

SANDY, UT — 1850 E. 9400 South (801) 523-7070

www.smokymountainpizza.com

■ HOURS

Hours may vary by location

Most locations have free banquet rooms available, craft cocktails and terrific patios for warm weather fun.

All Smoky Mountain Pizzerias offer online ordering, delivery and catering services. Check your local pizzeria for more information.

■ **MENU:** Casual dining pizzeria and grill with hand-tossed pizza, calzones,

sautéed and baked pasta, salads, sandwiches, burgers and more. Pizzas feature Parmesan baked crust and come in original hand-tossed, thin & crisp or gluten-free, with your choice of traditional tomato sauce, basil pesto or creamy garlic. Choose from 11 combination pizzas or make your own from more than 30 toppings (\$7.25-\$24.50). There are 14 pasta dishes (\$9.59-\$13.89), as well as entrée salads (\$10.99-\$13.79), burgers, sandwiches and grill choices including Atlantic salmon and BBQ chicken with a pineapple chipotle glaze.

Starter plates include homemade soup, garlic Parmesan fries and our signature Brie Kisses, with tender bites of baked brie cheese wrapped

in puff pastry and served with a boysenberry-jalapeno jam. The dessert menu will have you choosing between blackberry crème brûlée and the new Ice Cream Pie in the Sky or more. The beverage choices include bottomless soft drinks and mountain spritzers with seasonal flavors.

There's also a fun kids menu with a make-your-own pizza option (\$5.79-\$6.49).

Lunch combination specials are served till 5 p.m. and include a drink. (\$8.79-\$9.79).

And don't forget Happy Hour specials every day from 3-5:30 p.m. (Idaho locations)