

# Something New to Chew On

Every year brings a whole host of great new places to dine. Here are a few to sample this season.

BY MATT AMIS

Delaware's beach towns collectively represent one of the region's bona fide dining destinations. As such, there is constant movement among its many restaurants. Places close, new ones take their places, old owners sell, new ones buy, and so forth and so on. Here's the latest scorecard.

In spring, restaurateur Matt Haley added yet another eatery to his growing collection. The man behind Fish On, Lupo Di Mare, catch 54, Bluecoast and a bunch more opened **Betty's Pure and Simple** (18585 Coastal Hwy., No. 23, Rehoboth Beach, 645-6160), his ode to American family-style comfort food. Betty's, which re-imagines chicken and waffles, sloppy Joes and barbecued pork chops, opened in the spot formerly occupied by Adriatico at the Midway Shopping Center on Del. 1. The name Betty was chosen to conjure images and memories of aunts, neighbors or grandmas who were famous for their beef stroganoff or coleslaw.



**Café Azafran** has long been one of Lewes' many culinary destinations. This summer, the diminutive tapas hut takes its act down Coastal Highway into Rehoboth Beach (18 Baltimore Ave., Rehoboth Beach).

Also new in Rehoboth Beach is **Henlopen City Oyster House** (50 Wilmington Ave., Rehoboth Beach), which opened during the springtime in the spot formerly occupied by Celsius. Henlopen City boasts lots of fresh seafood and a sizable selection of oysters from both coasts—all wrapped in a rustic, family-friendly environment. Joe Baker and business partner Chris Bisaha gutted the former Celsius, then added a bar and a separate raw bar where customers can sit and mull over the day's selection of oysters, peruse the eclectic wine list, and consider the list of microbrews, which changes regularly. More than a few great restaurants in Rehoboth might also require you to take out a second mortgage to afford the tab. Henlopen City won't be that kind of place. Says Baker, "We wanted to create a spot where families can dine and become repeat customers."

Health-conscious **Hobos Restaurant + Bar** (56 Baltimore Ave., Rehoboth Beach, 226-2226), steered by owner and executive chef Gretchen Hanson, approaches cuisine from a global perspective, yielding menu items such as couscous towers with garlic, spinach and tomato, and quinoa salad with ginger salsa. Check out al fresco dining in Hobos' alley, where statuettes peer out from the lush foliage and walls are decorated with works by local artists.

For a sip and a snack, consider Hawaiian-themed boutique chain **Maui Wowi** (52 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach, 519-9808). Freshly-made fruit smoothies with varieties such as mango-orange and kiwi-lemon-lime and Hawaiian Kona coffee are the shop's trademark items. This location, led by owners Greg and Jennifer Goldman, also serves Hawaiian cookies and snacks. "The smoothies are very healthy, fat free and actually can be a good meal replacement," Greg says, "and very refreshing after a hot day at the beach."

In the place of the former Partner's Bistro on Rehoboth Avenue is **Rigby's Bar and Grill** (404 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach, 227-6080), a colorful and casual eatery that serves hearty bistro-style cuisine such as cedar-roasted wild salmon, braised pork shank and steak frites. One block over, Baltimore Avenue welcomed **A Touch of Italy** (33A Baltimore Ave., Rehoboth Beach, 227-1500), a New York-style Italian deli, bakeshop and gourmet grocer. You'll find house-smoked mozzarella courtesy of owner Lou Bascil, some great cured meats, cheeses, fresh bread, sandwiches, and more.

Casual eats made their way to Dewey Beach, too. **Muncheezzz** (1707 Coastal Hwy., Dewey Beach, 448-5584) is the oddly named eatery that was once known as Dewey Dogs. Owner David Goldfarb has turned his former hot dog haven into a full-scale deli, with pastrami and corned beef from New York, "and Italian ice from Queens," he says. Even more monumental: Muncheezzz will still sell hot dogs, but Goldfarb has made the switch from Sabrett hot dogs to Thumann's dogs.

Mixing it up along Rehoboth's vibrant Baltimore Avenue is **Mixx** (26 Baltimore Ave., Rehoboth Beach, 226-8700), owned by Ginger Breneman and Pete Borsari. Inside the spot formerly filled by Dish!, Mixx does new-American cuisine such as horseradish-braised "deviled" short ribs, and macadamia nut-crust rockfish. Entrées can be ordered in full portions or as small plate tapas. Chef Dave Sauers previously plied his trade at Fusion in Rehoboth Beach and Ponos Hawaiian Fine Dining in Dewey. Mixx draws big crowds on Wednesday nights for \$8 burgers and half-priced martinis.

**Po' Boys Creole and Fresh Catch** (900 Palmer St., Milton, 684-0890) has brought the taste of the bayou to Sussex in the form of New Orleans-inspired dishes made daily from scratch. Chef Lee Stewart and wife Amy serve everything from fried crawfish tails to red beans and rice, with plenty of titular po' boy sandwiches along the way. The restaurant pairs with fellow Miltonites Dogfish Head Brewery for beer dinners, and it pours wines by Milton Park, Australia.

**Scraps Beach House Bar** (1205 Coastal Hwy., Dewey Beach, 260-9841) takes over the spot formerly occupied by the Dewey Beach Club, and continues the old watering hole's tradition of burgers, beers, quesadillas and fried chicken.

A bit further inland, Maryland-based development giants Carl M. Freeman Companies opened two new eateries. **The Blue Scoop** (Bayside Village Town Center, Selbyville, 258-5018) is a homey ice cream parlor serving Woodside Farm Creamery ice cream and scrumptious desserts from Uncle Ralph's Cookies in Frederick, Maryland, and local fresh fruits. **Sláinte Pub and Restaurant** in Bayside Marketplace (31225 Americana Pkwy., Selbyville) is an Irish-style pub with a friendly atmosphere.