

J.S. Reutz's comfort food

Posted on April 15, 2009 by David Hoppe

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The angular steel architecture of the John H. Boner Community Center juts over the sidewalk at 2236 E. 10th St. like an emphatic promise. It proclaims a commitment to a neighborhood that's seen more than its share of hard times. It insists that things will get better.

That promise includes a place to eat, open just six months, called the J.S. Reutz Café. Located on the Boner Center's western corner, J.S. Reutz occupies a space the center has dedicated to the incubation of new neighborhood business. Jeff Reuter, the café's owner, will occupy this space until J.S. Reutz takes on a life of its own; then he'll move nearby and another entrepreneur will be given a shot. It's an ingenious way for the Boner Center to give new seedling enterprises the chance to take root.

According to its Web site, J.S. Reutz Café offers "a distinctive take on comfort foods as well as award-winning recipes." A visit last week confirmed this.

The space itself, with its high-ceiling, brightly-tiled accents and tall windows is light and airy, enhanced by a selection of works by local artist Wug Laku (the cafe also offers free Wi-Fi and cultural events). Eventually, the café hopes to offer outdoor dining but, in the meantime, the combination of those windows and its proximity to the sidewalk amount to the next best thing.

This is the kind of place where you order at the counter. As it happened, owner Jeff helped us navigate a menu featuring a variety of sandwiches and salads, as well as a meatloaf patrons rave about. He was friendly and informative, steering us toward the iced tea (\$2) for drinks and the spinach dip (\$5.95) for a starter.

The iced tea, I've got to say, was a bit pale for my taste. The spinach dip, on the other hand, accented with tasty bits of fresh tomato, was rich and refreshing.

My companion and I were both drawn to the sandwiches on offer; he ordered the grilled cheese (\$7.50) and I chose the Turben (\$8), a turkey Reuben.

Of the two, the grilled cheese was a real find, sophisticated comfort food combining Provolone and Swiss cheeses with pesto, almonds and tomato on toasted multi grain bread. My Turben - turkey pastrami, sauerkraut, Thousand Island and Swiss cheese on rye - was fine in every particular but could have benefited from a dash of horseradish or Dijon mustard.

Both sandwiches were served with potato salad (\$1.95) that was pleasantly sweet and super fresh.

J.S. Reutz offers a fresh soup every day. When we visited, the offering was a true Indianapolis icon, made famous by the L.S. Ayres Tearoom, Chicken Velvet (\$2.25 per cup; \$3 per bowl). This was the real deal, maybe even better, as I detected a subtle hint of bleu cheese in the mix.

We finished with dessert: a blueberry/pomegranate smoothie (\$3) and a slice of another Southern classic, buttermilk pie (\$1.99). The smoothie looked like a tie-dye T-shirt but tasted much fresher. It was good to the last slurp. As for the pie, its bread pudding-like consistency was sweet as a country sunset.

Men were at work across the street, making the vintage Jefferson apartments ready for a new generation. If better times are headed for East 10th Street, the J.S. Reutz Café has the fuel.

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Grilled Cheese with provolone, swiss, pesto, and almonds -



Grilled Cheese with provolone, swiss, pesto, and almonds -

J.S. Reutz Café

2236 E. 10th St.

Located in the main level of John H. Boner Community Center

317-808-2381

www.jsreutz.com

Hours

Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Cafe has started serving dinners on select nights; call for information.

FOOD: 3 stars

SERVICE: 4 stars

AMBIENCE: 3 stars

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