

Wall Street invests in atmosphere, pasta

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Wall Street Gallery and Bistro is filled with photography and stained glass art.

MAZOMANIE - When a "naturalist" who moved to Mazomanie for its nude beach fell in love with the capitalist financial planner who did her taxes, they began an especially romantic dining spot in this historic village.

Wall Street Gallery and Bistro, open three evenings a week, began serving food in 2006. Nancy and Jeff Wirth live above their restaurant, a former 19th century dry goods store. The restaurant seats 30 people, and most nights it's just the Wirths doing the work - she does the cooking and baking, and he makes the drinks.

As a result, the leisurely pace of the restaurant echoes the languid atmosphere of this picturesque village on the lower Wisconsin River.

But the stained glass and art photography that line the walls, including a deeply shadowed sunset portrait of Nancy au naturel with a glass of wine in her hand, distracts diners from any lulls in service.

The concept is design-your-own pasta dish. For \$15, diners can choose a pasta (capellini, linguini, fettuccini or cheese ravioli), vegetables (three are included in the price; choose from artichokes, onions, mushrooms, broccoli, tomatoes, carrots and

peppers) and house-made sauce (tomato, garlic and herb, pesto cream, Alfredo or stroganoff).

For an additional \$5, a protein can be added (shrimp, salmon, scallops, chicken, beef tenderloin or almond-crusted catfish).

One customized dish consisted of capellini with artichokes, onions and tomatoes in a pesto cream sauce with three scallops (four ounces total). The sauce was subtle, and everything melded together beautifully, despite the random-seeming ordering process.

The other creation was fettuccini with mushrooms, carrots and peppers in Alfredo sauce with memorably fresh-tasting, moist catfish encased in a crisp almond crust. Although the noodles in both dishes were cooked slightly beyond al dente, both were exceptionally good.

The pasta dinners come with Caesar side salads and homemade bread. The romaine lettuce was slightly tinged with brown, but the dressing was creamy and pleasantly garlicky.

The homemade bread of the night - a round loaf of sourdough made with cottage cheese, onion and dill - arrived after the salad, and right out of the oven.

Dense and moist with a thick crust, it didn't need to be dressed up with anything, and nothing was offered.

The basic Tuscan sourdough pizza (\$15) had a 12-inch homemade, medium-thick crust and came with a choice of four sauces (pesto and olive oil; tomato, garlic and herb; roasted garlic and olive oil; or white, garlic and Parmesan) and three cheeses (feta, provolone, mozzarella).

For an extra \$1 per veggie, you can add toppings like peppers, onions, mushrooms, artichokes and kalamata olives; and, for an additional \$2 per meat, add pepperoni, Italian sausage or Canadian bacon.

A concoction that included pesto, a mix of feta and mozzarella cheeses, with all the veggies and no meat was lush. With toppings towering a half-inch above the crust, it was as striking to look at as it was delicious.

The homemade nightly dessert, a white chocolate cheesecake with an almond cookie crust and topped with dark chocolate mousse and fresh whipped cream (\$4), was light and fluffy, but too sweet for anyone who doesn't have an extreme sweet tooth.

Or, maybe too rich for anyone concerned about how they might look if they're planning a visit to Mazo Beach.