

RESTAURANT REVIEW 43 CIRCA STL November 11 2016

FOOD: THE SECOND WORST DINNER IN RECENT MEMORY: (The worst so far this year was Urban Chestnut.) People in the business say you have to give a new restaurant a couple of months before you review it.

I disagree. People want to try new places and they deserve to know if they will be waiting 50 minutes for bad food. The restaurant has an obligation to have a soft opening and to discount prices or comp bills at tables having problems so the word of mouth reviews don't sink them.

Circa StL promised to be an interesting place. They moved into The Death Valley for restaurants. They are in the Des Peres Square Center on Manchester at I-270. The building formerly held Rib City and Zydeco Blues. The location is bad because Manchester Road is split with a large median that houses the Des Peres Cine. Only traffic going eastbound on Manchester can get to the restaurant.



We showed up two weeks after they opened. At 6:30 on a Friday night there were still tables available but by 7 PM there were some short waits. It was the first time the place had been full according to our waitress.



I was immediately impressed by all the St. Louis memorabilia hanging on the walls.



The almost good: On the menu was an old St. Louis Favorite: Famous Barr French Onion Soup (\$3.95). This soup used to draw ladies to the department store's restaurant for lunch for decades. Now, Famous Barr is no more. It is Macy's and they don't have restaurants.

This was one of the few things that we ordered that was okay. It looked a lot like the Famous Barr soup, but one thing was missing. The bread and cheese that floats on the top had not been in a broiler prior to being placed in the soup.



While we were waiting for our order the waitress apologized for the delay. Meanwhile the people at a table behind us told the waitress they could not wait any longer and left. For the main course my wife ordered something unique to St. Louis and I ordered a favorite. She got the "BBQ PORK STEAK" with a side of salad and green beans (\$10.95). Here is what arrived:



The green beans were missing as was the pork steak. What they were calling a "Pork Steak" was some pulled pork with burnt ends on top of a sizable amount of grease.

My order was a Rib Eye steak, an allegedly "loaded" baked potato and green beans. I told the waitress that I wanted the steak medium but would be happy to order it medium-well. She replied that she would put it in as "medium" as she could always send it back.

Things with my my order did not go very well, but at least the steak looked like a steak.



That "loaded" baked potato had 1/3 of a strip of bacon, a dab of sour cream and some white butter on the side. The green beans consisted of nine beans. The steak wasn't medium, it wasn't medium-rare; it was RAW,



It went back. When it was returned the green beans on the plate were missing. The steak had made it from raw to medium-rare, but wasn't very close to medium.

As I was eating it, I had to spit out a piece with so much grizzle that it had "Heimlich Maneuver" written all over it. Once again; I am a fat guy, who likes steak. I left 1/3 of the steak on the plate.



I can't recommend you buy anything to eat at the Circa StL. You might want to go in and order a Coke or a beer and walk around looking at all the stuff on the wall. But I would avoid the food.

The next night we had a meal at home with items from Dierbergs.

First there was the manager special on Strip Steaks at \$6 a steak. They were seasoned per our instructions by a butcher at Dierbergs. Next we split a \$1.50 twice baked potato that was loaded with sour cream, cheese and bacon bits. Finally we had seasoned green beans from the deli (\$6 a pound).

My wife fixed the steaks on a flat iron grill plate on top of the stove just right. There was no sending them back. I did the potato and green beans in the oven. Total time: 15-minutes. Cost per meal \$7.75!.



Okay, I already ate half of the steak at home before I remembered to take the second photo.