

Restaurant Review 53 Sugarfire BBQ Olivette June 30 2017

RESTAURANT REVIEW: SUGARFIRE OLIVETTE OFF HOURS: Several times a year we will go to the original Sugarfire Smoke House BBQ joint in the strip shopping center on Olive Blvd at Price Road in Olivette. We made a trip to Sugarfire a week after our worst meal of the year at Phil's BBQ, just for some good BBQ.

We once had a couple of Londoners who retired to an island between Holland and Germany staying with us for a few days. They were doing a road trip on Route 66 having flown into Chicago and rented a car to be dropped off at LAX.

I told them if they were smart they would get to LA early and then drive up California Highway 1. They did exactly that.

But while they stayed here the first night was at the Kirkwood Brewery where we ate off bar tables and listened to the Dave Dickey Big Band, the next night was at Sugarfire where they ate off of trays lined with wax paper with no plates and the third night it was O'Connell's Irish Pub where the meals were served on a paper plates. After dinner stops included Ted Drewes the first night time on my suggestion and the second time on their last night in town on their insistence. .



Bob and Rosemary from across the pond eating off wax paper at Sugarfire. Why take them to Tony's if they haven't had BBQ?

When we went to Sugarfire last month we did so in between the lunch and dinner rushes. Often you can show up with a line going out the door and signs up saying they are sold out of favorites. Our 3 o'clock appearance on a Thursday resulted in none of that.



There is no table service at Sugarfire. It is a cafeteria style line. There are menus, but the ones most people use are the handwritten ones on the wall.



It was National Bourbon Day and one of the specials was the Billy Idol single beef rib in bourbon glaze and a side (\$12.99). That was what my wife picked. I went with the combo of brisket, ribs, two sides and a drink (\$14.99).



The lone beef rib had lots of meat. It was warm and I thought tasty, but my wife thought it had way too much fat. Then she added something far too healthy to go with a BBQ meal. (see above)

Mine was another story. My sides were hand cut fries. How can you go wrong with that? I'll tell you in just a second. I also went with the green beans that between butter and spices were not especially healthy but perfect with BBQ.



My ribs were GREAT. I prefer “fall off the bone” ribs, but real BBQ people tell you the meat should be tender and easy to remove from the bone, but not “fall off the bone.” These ribs had meat still attached to the bone. They were warm and very tasty. The green beans were also very good. (Much better than they looked) However the brisket was a disappointment. It was not warm and it was chewy.

Being a Midwesterner and for 15 years a fat guy (I recently lost 40 pounds and still qualify as a fat guy) there is rarely a cooked potato that I don’t like. These looked good but were stone cold. Also they were stuck together. This could have been a result of frying, but I think it was more the case of grease gelling.



Cold French fries stuck together

Sugarfire is a joint where you add the BBQ sauce but they give you plenty to choose from on every table.



The one other caution about Sugarfire is they serve off-brand soda. The Lucky Cola, which I think is made in Breeze, Illinois is some of the worst I have ever tasted. Luckily I had the misfortune of having it at the Urban Chestnut Brewery (one of our worst experiences in 2016) so I knew better. I tried the root beer. Although I prefer root beer in a frosted mug and no ice, it was acceptable in a paper cup with ice.



Here is the gamble with Sugarfire. If you go at the height of lunch or dinner there will be long lines, a full parking lot and full tables. Also they might be out of popular favorites. However the food should be hot. If you go in the middle of the day there are no lines, plenty of food, but some of it might be cold.