

# Gasthaus Restaurant dishes up the *gemuetlichkeit*

**G**emuetlichkeit. It's hard to say (sort of like ga-mewt-lish-kite), but easy to experience for guests to the Bluegrass' premier German restaurant. Not only a Teutonic tongue twister, but hard to translate into English as well, it refers to the comfortable feeling of anything cozy and quaint. Since 1993, Annemarie and Michael Greipel have treated thousands of Kentuckians to the best in German cooking and—you guessed it—loads of *gemuetlichkeit* at their upscale German eatery, the Gasthaus.

Originally from Bochum, Germany, the Greipels have turned their Louisville establishment into a successful family-run business. While Michael and his sons run the kitchen, Annemarie and the girls take care of the front of the house, tending to the guests, many of them regulars.

Attention to detail is evident at all turns, from the fresh meats and vegetables Michael handpicks daily to the desserts and pastries Annemarie creates every evening. Even the table linens are washed and ironed personally by the owner herself.

Nonetheless, the food continues to be the most impressive addition to the tables at the Gasthaus. Created from old family recipes, the dishes offer the best way to sample authentic German cuisine, short of a trip to Munich or Stuttgart. Flavorful and refined, the plates conjured up by the Greipels break the stereotype of German food as bland and heavy.

Guests can choose from several homemade soups and salads as starters, but the entrees are the star features on the Gasthaus menu. Old favorites are the sauerbraten, a filet of beef marinated for seven days in wine, vinegar and spices; and the rouladen, braised beef rolls filled with bacon, onion and pickle. Although a staple of the German diet, the gulasch is actually a beef, tomato

and paprika stew from Hungary. Those not feeling so adventurous can always stick with the bratwurst and pan-fried potatoes, bratkartoffeln.

For something a little different, the various types of schnitzel, or cutlet, are another option. Originally an Austrian specialty, the Wiener schnitzel (Viennese cutlet) is a veal filet that is breaded and then fried. The Zigeuner schnitzel, or gypsy cutlet, is another popular choice, consisting of breaded pork loin with a tangy sauce of mushrooms, onions, bacon and red pepper. The Jaeger schnitzel is another pork dish, served with a mushroom cream sauce in the traditional hunter's style.

The side dishes are typical of those found in many German kitchens. Some entrees come with delicious fried potatoes and sauerkraut, but the house specialties are doubtlessly the rotkohl and the spaetzle.

Not as strong or pungent as the old Teutonic standby of sauerkraut, the red cabbage or rotkohl offers a sweet and tangy alternative. It is simmered for hours with spices and vinegar and makes an ideal side for dishes with pork or chicken. Spaetzle refers to the typical type of pasta from Germany's southern and central regions. Best described as a cross between a noodle and a dumpling, the main ingredients are eggs and flour, even though recipes and variations are numerous.

All of this can be washed down with a variety of German wines and beer, and the coffee is best saved for dessert. Rich and dark, it makes the perfect addition to one of Annemarie's handcrafted pastries or cakes. Attractively displayed on the front counter, Mrs. Greipel's baked goods serve as a testament to her artistry and creativity in the kitchen.

The apfelstrudel is a house specialty, a comforting blend of warm apples and cinnamon wrapped in flaky pastry served with ice cream and whipped cream. Another sweet feature is the black forest cake or Schwarzwaldler kirsch torte, which offers visitors layers

of chocolate sponge with dark cherries, whipped cream and chocolate shavings. Chocoholics will love the fallen chocolate soufflé, a warm fudge cake served with vanilla ice cream, and for something different, the

Linzer torte should not be missed. A concoction of ground hazel nuts, pastry and raspberry preserves, it is originally a specialty from Austria.

The ambience at the Gasthaus is enhanced as much by the authentic surroundings as by the authentic cuisine. Waitresses wear real dirndls, the traditional German folk dress, while family bric-a-brac and pictures adorn the chalet-style walls. Located at 4812 Brownsboro Center, just seconds from I-71, the Gasthaus is open 6-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. For more information call (502) 899-7177.

—DAVID DOMINE



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