

Perkins outshines similar restaurants

By Bill Allen
Senior Editor

The new Perkins 'Cake & Steak at 48th and O streets opened about a month ago. I was invited to the Grand Opening, but that's not how I like to do reviews.

Dining Review

Everyone is nice to you during Grand Openings. Grand Openings don't always give you a real impression of what a restaurant will be like a month later. And, of course, sometimes at a Grand Opening all the operations aren't running smoothly yet, so the theory works both ways.

Anyway, after waiting a month for a routine to settle in, a companion and I had dinner at Perkins Monday night. It was a pleasant dinner.

The new Perkins — Lincoln's second — reminds me of the Denny's Restaurant and Village Inn Pancake House chains. They are places you can have breakfast

or a burger anytime. The decor was relaxing, with a lot of green and brown and plants. It wasn't overly fancy, nor cheap and gaudy.

Perkins, which is open 24 hours, offers a full menu with a wide variety of items, from a ham and cheese omelet to a soup and salad bar to fried chicken and steaks.

I had the 'Cakes and Steak, since it is unfair to review this type of restaurant without trying the breakfast.

My companion had the sirloin. The steaks were cooked perfectly and the meat was top quality. I usually use a bit of A-1 Steak Sauce, but Perkins provided a cup of brown gravy sauce that was much tastier. Besides, when the steak is that good, no sauce is needed.

As for the rest of the meal, the word that fits best is fresh. The eggs were well-cooked and the 'cakes were light and tasted better than usual restaurant fare (you realize, of course, that no one has come close to beating my Aunt Betsy's yet.)

Perkins serves thin steak fries which taste better than fast-food fries. Beyond that, it's kind of hard to describe

French fries. Perkins also had a soup and salad bar, and while I didn't try it, it seemed fairly well stocked and the soup looked good.

If you've read this far, you've probably been to Denny's and Village Inn. But Perkins' food tastes fresher than Denny's. The Perkins' breakfasts were comparable to Village Inn's. As a matter of fact, I would be hard-pressed to say which is better. I think, though, that it would be easier to get a basic breakfast at Perkins.

The service at Perkins was especially good. The host, the waitress and the cashier were courteous and did their jobs efficiently.

If the restaurant can maintain this fresh food and quality service for a long time, it should be successful in its new location.

The prices were comparable to similar restaurants. Our final bill was \$13.50, which is reasonable for a dinner, a steak and egg breakfast and drinks.

Of course, the restaurant also offers a wide variety of burgers, sandwiches

— trademarked "Grandwiches" — and omelets at lower prices.

They also had some incredible-looking desserts that I am sure would live up to their motto of "We're going to Grandmother you..."

I didn't try them Monday, but I'm sure I'll go back sometime for pie and coffee.

The new Perkins is a little better right now than similar restaurants in Lincoln.

Blues sound fills Zoo

Charlie Musslewhite brings his world-renowned harmonica sound to the Zoo bar tonight and Thursday. Admission will be \$3 at the door. Critics and peers alike consider Musslewhite one of the world's finest harmonica players.

Famous bluesman Big Joe Williams said, "Charlie Musslewhite is one of the greatest living harp players."

The San Francisco Chronicle called Musslewhite "one of the best."

Musslewhite grew up in Mississippi and Memphis, Tenn., learning the blues from Will Shade and his Memphis Jug Band. Musslewhite

has said Will's connection with the Blues goes "way back." His mother, who was raised as a slave, taught Will everything, Musslewhite said. Musslewhite got his professional start playing the Blues clubs of Chicago during the mid '60s.

With 11 albums to his credit and countless other appearances on records, Musslewhite is now a seasoned veteran of the blues.

Downbeat magazine once said, "Musslewhite has no white and few black peers on his instrument...he has a keening, unbearably painful sound, fine timing and excellent chops."

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