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FIVE TWIN PORTS

FOOD FAVORITES

Why they're still worthy of their reputations

Story and photos by **Jana Hollingsworth**
For the News Tribune

Spirited Northland eaters could fight about our best pizzas, burgers or sandwiches for days. There's plenty to fuel the debate because the area is chock-full of tasty dishes. But few enjoy the kind of fame that has followed some for decades, such as the Pickwick's pepper cheeseburger and onion rings, a Sammy's pizza or an Anchor burger. Others

haven't been around as long — less than 20 years for the Northern Waters Smokehaus Cajun Finn, and a few years for Pak's pad Thai burrito — but they have fans who will travel hours to get their fix.

I picked this handful of popular locally-owned restaurant meals to examine with a fresh eye and to ponder how they earned their reputations.

Jana Hollingsworth is a former News Tribune reporter turned freelance writer, and a Twin Ports native. You can reach her at JanaHDNT@gmail.com.



When your wine needs to breathe

By **Dave McIntyre**
Washington Post

Part of wine's mythology is that it needs to "breathe." Breathing goes along with the idea that wine is alive — it evolves in the bottle and the glass, it has moods, it gets better with age, like the best of us, at least to a point. The idea behind letting a wine breathe, in the bottle, a glass or decanter, is that time and air will allow its flavors to express themselves.

And, of course, there's an entire industry of wine accessories to help us add air to our wines. Decanters are traditional, elegant and sometimes incredibly expensive. The ritual of decanting is so ingrained in wine tradition, it is included in the service examination for the Court of Master Sommeliers certification program.

More recently, devices called aerators became popular. You pour a wine through this gizmo into your glass or decanter, and a swirling, gurgling effect adds air violently, instantly aging the wine, supposedly. I've never been convinced aerators had more than a momentary effect on a wine's flavor.

The conventional wisdom about allowing a wine to breathe is controversial. Simply pulling a cork or twisting off a screw cap and letting a bottle stand for a while will not add much air to wine — only a little bit of liquid is exposed in the neck of the bottle.

Even decanting has its detractors. Exposing a wine to air allows its aromas to dissipate, not develop, according to this argument. And why would you want to lose flavor?

Keith Goldston, a master sommelier who is beverage director for Landry's Inc., a national restaurant group based in Houston, is a decanting skeptic.

"In wine, we are always looking for a fail-safe solution," Goldston says. "I find decanting unpredictable — sometimes it works, sometimes it



PAD THAI BURRITO FROM PAK'S GREEN CORNER

1901 Tower Ave., Superior
715-392-4444

paks-green-corner-new-location.business.site

We were introduced to this novelty of a burrito in the first version of Kamolpak Williams' Thai fusion restaurant in 2012. It skyrocketed to fame after appearing on the Food Network's "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives." Pak closed that West Duluth location in 2014 and reopened in 2018 in Superior. The burrito is back, and it's as fun as ever. For the uninitiated, Pak makes a traditional pad Thai — carrots, egg, chicken (or another protein), and noodles bathed in glorious saucy heat — stuffs it inside a tortilla, and there you go. Carbs on top of delicious carbs.

PAD THAI BURRITO

NORTHERN WATERS SMOKEHAUS' CAJUN FINN

394 S. Lake Ave., Duluth
218-724-7307

Northernwaterssmokehaus.com

The spicy Cajun Finn is the Smokehaus' best-selling sandwich by half. And they sell a lot of sandwiches. Like, a lot. The Cajun Finn is not my favorite sandwich. I'm ride or die for the Cold Turkey, the Northern Bagel. But I recognize the Cajun Finn for the superb creation that it is. Its beautiful colors, contrasting textures and flavors, the freshness of the ingredients. That gorgeous salmon. I understand the hype. Owner Eric Goerd and his band of merry sandwich makers were cranking out quality products long before national fame made it so you had to scream "Laker headed under the bridge!" to clear the line. Reputation earned, tenfold.



CAJUN FINN

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