



Photos by Benjamin Margalit/Margalit Studio

Just about everything on the menu is created right in their own kitchen. Libation lovers will take special interest in the *Mavis Winkle's* Taste of Ireland special, which includes four seven-ounce pours of Guinness, Harp, Bass, and Smithwick's, or you can substitute one or two Irish Whiskeys.

by Patricia Nugent
Contributing Writer

Dating back to 1611, the village pubs of Ireland were called “public houses,” known for more than pints and fare, but as gathering places where spirited stories were told and retold, business transpired, and everyone greeted each other with vigor and warmth.

The same essence of Celtic hospitality lives on at Mavis Winkle's in Independence and Twinsburg. When Mary Jo and Bill Demopoulos took a trip to the Emerald Isle, they fell in love with the breathtaking scenery and charm of its people.

The magical trip had a transformative effect on them. They returned still missing the colorful pubs they had enjoyed and decided to re-create one here in Cleveland, opening their restaurants in 2001 and 2005.

“A restaurant isn't just a place you come to have a meal and fill a basic need to eat,” says Mary Jo, whose family hails from Ireland. “It's a place you come to fill your soul as well.”

A Charming Nod to the Old Sod

Much like the pubs of Erin, the décor here is dotted with paintings and antique photos of the sweeping Irish countryside, roaring fireplaces of stone, brick, and carved wood, rustic tables, plenty of glass and brass, and many shades of green throughout.

In addition to the charming atmosphere, Mary Jo says that guests rave about the

home-cooked fare and freshness of local ingredients found on the family-friendly menu, a combination not likely to be found elsewhere.

Just Like Grandma Used to Make

Fables claim that shepherds created Shepherd's Pie as means of repurposing leftovers, from mounds of cooked lamb and vegetables, to the rich crust made from mashed potatoes. Regardless of who invented it, today this filling dish remains a mouthwatering delight. As tribute to the meals she was raised on, Mary Jo uses her grandmother's recipe, with hearty ground sirloin and roasted root vegetables in a savory gravy topped with garlic mashed potatoes.

“A restaurant isn't just a place you come to have a meal and fill a basic need to eat. It's a place you come to fill your soul as well.”

A classic from her family recipe box is Grandma's Irish Stew, which features lamb and beef, potatoes, onions, carrots, and celery with mashed potatoes, available Thursday, Friday, and Saturday for dine-in or to-go.

Another traditional dish, Fish & Chips, consists of a generous portion of lightly breaded and fried haddock served alongside the savory potato or sweet potato fries. Daily features are a big draw, including the Guinness Onion Soup, and (what else?) the Potato Soup.

“For anyone who hasn't tried our pub

menu, we hope they can enjoy our Winter Special of half price on any selection, from corned beef and cabbage to strip steak,” says Mary Jo.

Though Irish fare is often placed in the stick-to-your-ribs category, the crafty chefs at Mavis Winkle's have come up with some scrumptious gluten-free, vegan, and vegetarian dishes, such as the Beet Burger with sunflower seeds, the Portobello Mushroom Burger, and the zesty Zucchini Quinoa Burger.

With its bustling locations, it's no surprise that the pubs do an exceptional lunch business. Power lunchers enjoy an express menu with a plethora of tasty options that are quick coming to the table.

Libation lovers will take special interest in the Mavis Winkle's Taste of Ireland special, which includes four seven-ounce pours of Guinness, Harp, Bass, and Smithwick's, or you can substitute one or two Irish Whiskeys.

Green Stamp of Approval

Even people outside of Cleveland have fallen in love with the authentic pub atmosphere. Crystal B., who recently visited our fair city from New York for an Irish Dance competition had this to say: “The décor is everything Ireland. The owner personally seated us as well as chatted with us after our meal, and our waitress gave us just the right amount of attention and was genuine. Mavis Winkle's is on our list when we return for next year's competition.”

In addition to the pub and restaurant, both Mavis Winkle's locations include a Hooley Hall, a banquet room ideal for parties, showers, rehearsal dinners, company

You might be a little bit Irish, but are you a little bit *Mavis Winkle's* Irish? Get there and discover the flavors and allure of the Emerald Isle.



When Mary Jo and Bill Demopoulos took a trip to the Emerald Isle, they fell in love with the breathtaking scenery and charm of its people. The magical trip had a transformative effect on them. They decided to re-create it here in Cleveland, opening their *Mavis Winkle's* restaurants in 2001 and 2005.



meetings, family reunions, high school reunions, and more. It holds up to 90 people. A choice of banquet menus is available for parties, plus you can rent the hall without a room charge.

And, we are but a few wee days away from that holiest of holy days for Irish restaurants and pubs—St. Patrick's Day.

"We open our doors at 8:00 a.m. and start celebrating with kegs and eggs and a full, all you can eat, breakfast buffet of meats, French toast, potatoes, corned beef hash, and other specialties for only \$13 for adults, and \$6 for children," she says. For those who wish to catch the St. Patrick's Day parade, shuttle service will be provided by Mavis Winkle's, to and from their Independence location and the downtown parade location. For details, check their website.

But before you can say "faith and begorra," it'll all be over. "I hope people realize that we're the kind of establishment that celebrates the charm of the Irish all the other 364 days of the year, too."

Visit Mavis Winkle's within Crown Centre (Independence's tallest building) at 5005 Rockside Road, 216-525-0770. Convenient designated parking is available. The Twinsburg location is at 8870 Darrow Road, 330-405-3663. The bustling restaurants offer call-ahead seating to make sure you have a table waiting for you. Visit the newly launched site, MavisWinkles.com, for a full listing of specials and to join the Pub Club, which rewards loyal customers.

Fish Fry Fridays

Don't miss one of the best fish fries in town, featuring a slew of specials, like *Mavis Winkle's* Fish & Chips with beer-battered haddock, shrimp cocktail, fresh Atlantic salmon cooked five ways, crispy calamari drizzled with hot sauce and pepper rings, all available for dine in or to go. Through Easter, the tantalizing Lenten menu will give these 40 days their culinary due.

Irish Family Fun Fair

On Sunday, March 15, visit either *Mavis Winkle's* location for a family-friendly fabulous fest. Enjoy Magic with Morris, who will entertain tableside, face painting, Irish dancers and a few surprises.

Half-Priced Dining!

Visit MimiDeals.com to purchase a \$50 *Mavis Winkle's* certificate for just \$25 and enjoy twice the authentic Irish fare for half the price. And while the luck o' the Irish never truly fades, this deal is limited and will be gone before you know it.