
Fast Eddie's brings modern comfort food to Shoppes at Parma (Review)



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CLEVELAND, Ohio – Meet the new Parmatown, not the same as the old Parmatown. It's the Shoppes of Parma now – a sleek modern shopping center.

Nowhere is the new Parma vibe more apparent than at Fast Eddie's fantastic modern comfort food restaurant. Opened earlier this fall, Fast Eddie's occupies the space where Houlihan's and a parade of other chains once stood.

Owned by chef Eddie Cerino, who also heads the popular Pizzeria Cerino in Seven Hills, **Fast Eddie's** [<http://www.fasteddiesparma.com/>] is an update of a restaurant many south siders might remember: the Fast Eddie's that stood on Pearl Road in Parma from 1985 to '94 (in the former Bearden's site). Known for their "creative burger cuisine" long before hipster chefs in trendier areas, and comfort faves like city chicken and meatloaf, Fast Eddie's closed when the city bought the land for a fire station.

Now, thirty years after opening, Cerino's concept - and meatloaf - has been reborn. But like the mall that houses it, this is not your grandmother's Fast Eddie's. Yes, the burgers and meatloaf and city chicken are still there – but this time served in an industrial-chic bistro that includes an upscale bar and creative cocktails like the Green Goblin Mule. Made with Lucid absinthe, Midori, ginger beer, fresh lime and served in a traditional copper mug, it was as good as anything at a downtown cocktail bar and at \$8, almost half the price.

Starters are equally surprising in Cerino's comfort food rethinking. The sunnyside egg and mushroom toast with caramelized onions, mushrooms and baby arugula on toasted brioche bread (\$6) was a delightful update on a dinner classic, with the onion and mushrooms adding a savory counterpoint to the creamy egg.

The roasted beet and green apple salad with goat cheese, walnuts and orange-honey vinaigrette (\$9) was a little bland – too much arugula and not enough of the other ingredients, but it was the only misstep in our meal.

The Kung Pao lettuce wraps, with ground chicken, peppers, carrots, scallions and cabbage (\$8) were truly a delicious revelation. The moist moist chicken was perfectly spiced with the nuts, scallions and sesame-ginger sauce.

Lest you think Fast Eddie's is forgetting their roots, the enormous platter of beer-battered onion rings were equally impressive (\$8). Crispy and just greasy enough with soft-on-the-inside breading, they were a blast from the culinary past – though served with some very-now chipotle ketchup, ranch-like green goddess dressing and honey mustard.

My entrée was also old world-meets-new. In a nod to Eddie's past, I opted for the peanut butter burger. But unlike an old style diner burger, this was a thick 7 oz. patty of certified angus beef on a buttery brioche bun, topped with thick slices of applewood smoked bacon and dill chips (\$12.50). It was delicious – juicy, sweet and salty. To the modern palette, the retro peanut butter

paired with pickles gave an almost Thai flavor.

Other enticing burger options included the London, with Tillamook cheddar, bacon, mustard aioli, lettuce, tomato, onion; Eddie's Favorite, with Swiss cheese, sautéed mushrooms, onions, bacon and sour cream; the Classic, with American cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion and pickle; and the Cocky Swine with a house chicken blend mixed with applewood bacon, American cheese, jalapenos, caramelized onions and a fried egg.

All burgers come with a choice of fresh cut fries, baked beans, green beans, coleslaw or sweet potato fries. I opted for the latter, because I had heard good things about them at Fast Eddie's even though I'm not usually a fan of sweet potatoes.

I am now. Served hot and crisp, the thin, not-too-sweet fries were perfectly complemented by the tangy maple, sriracha dipping sauce.

My dining companion also opted for a meaty option, something he has never ordered in a restaurant: meatloaf. It seemed the thing to do on a Sunday afternoon in Parma, though the sesame-maple glazed salmon and chicken-and-bacon mac 'and' cheese with cheddar ale cream sauce tempted.

Eddie's is not your grandma's flavorless meat lump. Their meatloaf was a flavorful slice of bourbon grilled, moist angus beef topped with tangy barbeque sauce and crispy opinions and served over garlic green beans (\$15).

My 8-year-old daughter could hardly decide what to order at Fast Eddie's. Their children's menu is limited – mac and cheese, grilled cheese, chicken tenders and cheeseburgers. So many of the regular menu offering items appeal to young diners, she opted to order from it, too. Her meal started with a cup of their delicious chicken cacciatore soup (\$3), a savory homage to Cerino's Italian roots with a tomato-based broth surrounding tender chicken and vegetables. For her entrée, she chose the kids mac and cheese, large al dente shells in a rich white cheese cream sauce.

She was a bit disappointed that the chicken paprikash was not on offer the time we visited – though it just means we'll be back again, later in the day next time.

In a neat gesture to their diner roots, Fast Eddie's offers one Blue Plate special a day, but only after 4 p.m. Sunday is Paprikash, Monday is sausage and pierogi, other days include Queen City Chili, "Meat and Potatoes," and yes, City Chicken on Wednesday. Now when's the last time you saw that on a menu that also featured absinthe?

Taste Bites: Fast Eddie's Kitchen and Bar

Where: 7729 W. Ridgewood Drive, Parma

Contact: 440-340-4423

Online: <http://www.fasteddiesparma.com/> [<http://www.fasteddiesparma.com/>]

Hours: 11 a.m. – 10 p.m. Monday – Thursday. 11 a.m. – 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Noon to 9 p.m. Sunday.

Prices: Small plates and starters, \$4 - \$11. Burgers, \$10 - \$12.50. Entrees, \$15 - \$26.

Reservations: Accepted.

Credit cards: All major cards.

Cuisine: American, comfort food, diner, burgers, Italian, Eastern European.

Kids: Small \$5 children's menu, plus many items kids will like on regular menu.

Bar: Full bar with new and classic cocktails, large craft beer selection.

Accessibility: Fully accessible.

Grade: ***