

# Dine and unwind

## The many charms of Café d'Marie



Leslie Klipsch  
Chef, baker, chiropractor and proprietor DeAnna  
Walter holding her son Anthony at Café d'Marie.

*Each month in *The Gold Standard*, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, will shine a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — the unique people, businesses and trends — for *Gold Book* readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and their three young children, and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer.*

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

**S**ettling into my soft chair at Café d'Marie, I feel my shoulders relax. I tap my foot on the hardwood floor to jazz playing softly overhead. I hear the oven door snap shut; the espresso machine hiss. The exposed brick of the open kitchen, the deep chocolate walls, the beautiful woodwork and the ambient lighting all lull me into a state of ease and comfort. One bite of blueberry goat cheese quiche and there's no place I'd rather be.

I'm surprised to learn that this thoughtfully renovated space wasn't always going to be what it is today: a lovely little café with delicious food and a peaceful, charming atmosphere.

"I'm a chiropractor and this space was going to be my chiropractic office and adjustment area," Dr. DeAnna Walter explained to me over coffee on a recent sunny morning. "I had no real intention of it being a restaurant. I just wanted to reduce the sterile environment typical of doctor's offices and create something warm and relaxing for my patients as they waited for care. A warm atmosphere, a

cup of organic tea ... these things encourage wellness and a healthy daily lifestyle.”

But after locals tasted her baked goods and drank her coffee, they started bringing their friends and asking for more. “The unexpected happened before we even knew it was happening,” she smiles. Two years later, Ms. Walter runs Café d’Marie with an expanded menu, a staff of four and a presence in the Gold Coast neighborhood beyond anything she expected.

Cooking for people, however, isn’t a stretch for Ms. Walter, who says she does a lot of creative home cooking — an art form she learned from her father. “My dad never followed recipes. Instead, he would just experiment with different things. I remember him frying a hamburger in orange juice and it being really good,” she says with a laugh. “I do the same thing at the café. I don’t have written recipes. I love to combine three or four and just play around to develop my own. It’s a lot of fun for me.” A picture of a young Ms. Walter and her late father hangs on the wall of the café kitchen where scones, cookies, quiche, soup, salads and paninis are made fresh daily.

Ms. Walter’s sister, Dr. Tonia Rogers, lives next door in another charming brick home with their mother. She admires her sister’s creativity and foresight. “Deanna has always had excellent vision. When we first walked into this space, she was the only one who could see its potential.” The two women attended Palmer College of Chiropractic together and Ms. Rogers offers acupuncture

in a room just off the main seating area of the café. Massage therapy is also offered on-site and Ms. Walter, who has residence on the second story of the building that houses the café, hopes to soon begin treating patients as well — all according to her original plan.

A sense of family seems to contribute to the warm vibe of the cafe, where regulars have been known to cuddle Ms. Walter’s 2-month-old son while she buses tables. “We’ve developed such great relationships with our customers,” she explains, exuding another tenet of healthy living: gratitude. “The Quad-Cities are amazing. This café was grown because of the people. I might make a good quiche, but I couldn’t have sold it without the generosity of the people here. We don’t take anyone who walks through the door for granted.”

## **My favorites**

What I savor most about Cafe d’Marie is its perfect combination of delicious, interesting food and its lovely atmosphere. In fact, this downtown Davenport cafe reminds me of a place I enjoyed years ago while living on the north side of Chicago. I would walk to Uncommon Ground for my morning coffee and a pastry or lunch with friends and end up staying to simply enjoy my novel and soak up the atmosphere. Café d’Marie captures a similar feeling. Ms. Walter and her partner, Rick Kimmel, have created a warm, comfortable oasis, perfect for meeting friends or for sitting solo by the window in a cozy chair and watching the world go by.

## The doctor's favorites

Ms. Walter believes that a person should be able to enjoy eating rich, delicious food, as long as it's in moderation. That's why she's not afraid to prepare soup with decadent crème and baked goods with real butter and then enjoy a reasonable portion each day. Her ideal lunch at Café d'Marie? A cup of flavorful, home-made soup and a large green salad topped with her own recipe for blueberry-feta vinaigrette. "We make our salads with mixed greens and tons of fresh-cut veggies. It has a wonderful flavor and is both healthy and delicious," she muses.

## Why you should go

Quiche is made fresh daily with all sorts of wonderful, creative combinations (honey, cherries, goat cheese and spinach was a recent offering) and you'll find sandwiches prepared like nowhere else in town. Gluten-free and vegan selections are available, guaranteeing that there's something for all of your dining companions. If you can't linger, simply stop by the cafe to grab a whole-leaf organic iced green tea on your way to explore the beautiful homes of The Gold Coast. Or pick up a ham, salami and smoked gouda



Leslie Klipsch

panini and a slice of lemon zest cake and enjoy a picnic along the river.

## When you should go

Café d'Marie (614 W. 5th St., Davenport) is open seven days a week between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

