

'Bone' appétit! Dog-friendly dining in Morris

Susan Bloom, Correspondent 1:42 a.m. EDT July 30, 2014



(Photo: Courtesy Morristown Deli)

If there's one summer ritual that Dalena DeGrezia never tires of, it's the opportunity to enjoy breakfast with her four-year-old rescue dog, Emma, at the Morristown Deli's outdoor café.

Upon their arrival, "the whole staff comes out and greets Emma and she enjoys cucumber water from an eco-friendly bamboo bowl and a meal off their special dog menu," the 38-year-old pharmaceutical industry executive and Morristown resident shared.

According to DeGrezia, even the walk there fills her beloved pet with excitement. "We eat there every weekend and Emma knows when we're going and can't wait to get there," she said. "It's a treat for us and officially declares the weekend."

At the 36-year-old Morristown Deli, owned by the dog-loving Marowitz family, four-legged friends and their owners have been officially welcomed and served at the restaurant's adjacent 75-seat outdoor café ever since the café first opened 3 to 4 years ago.

"All dogs get a bowl of water (blue bowls for boys and pink for girls), an appropriately-sized dog mat to lay on, shade from strategically-angled umbrellas and access to a special dog menu, which includes such entrées as roast beef or chicken with rice and vegetables or scrambled eggs, Swiss cheese, and bacon (all priced from \$5.50-6.50), followed by a small dessert treat," said Ryan Marowitz, 34.

"Many people are very attached to their pets and don't want to leave them cooped up in the house; being dog owners ourselves, we thought we should offer something special for dogs," he explained. "People walking around Morristown with their dogs love to be able to sit and eat and we typically see at least 50 to 60 dogs in our café on any given summer weekend."

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Other Morris County restaurants are capitalizing on the opportunity to accommodate canine customers as well.

At Potbelly's Riverside Café in Rockaway, a seven-year-old eatery serving classic American fare, "we welcome dogs on our patio and will typically seat several dogs with their owners over the course of a weekend," said waitress Maggie Munro. "Customers always appreciate when we bring out bowls of water and sometimes they'll order food off the menu for their dogs. It's a fun outing for dogs and their owners and also a convenience for customers so that they don't have to worry about taking their dogs home or leaving them behind."

As the owner of a Maltese and a Yorkshire terrier, Luigi Viola, owner of Luigi's Italian Restaurant in East Hanover, said that over the 26 years that his establishment has been there, it never occurred to him not to welcome dogs to the restaurant's 30- to 40-seat outdoor courtyard.

"I've never made a big deal out of it; we do it as a convenience for our customers, who have all become our friends. If you're taking a Sunday ride with your dog, it's great to be able to stop in, sit outside and enjoy a meal together," Viola said. "We're just one big happy family and everyone loves it."

Elsewhere throughout the county, dogs are similarly welcomed with open arms.

At Soho 33 in Madison, for example, dogs and their owners can take advantage of the opportunity to dine in the restaurant's eight-seat outdoor patio area, while Denville's Heritage Grill has long welcomed canine companions. "I love dogs and we've been dog-friendly ever since we first opened 15 years ago," said Heritage Grill owner Gail Redmond.

While all of the restaurant owners agree that opening their doors to dogs can certainly present opportunities for fur to fly, "we've never had a problem with dogs being aggressive, barking, fighting, disrupting other customers or making a mess," said Marowitz, whose Morristown Deli participates in a range of other animal-related activities year-round, including a pet fair and adoption event held on their premises with radio station WDHA every May.

"People only bring well-behaved dogs," Potbelly's Munro agreed.

"Dogs are truly part of the family today and Morristown and Morris County are especially dog-friendly," Marowitz said. "Many area dogs are so familiar with us that they can't go past the restaurant without pulling their owners in. It's fun for the dogs too — none of them have ever complained about the food!"

As for the best — or worst — part of this pooch-friendly proposition? "Emma gets cranky if we're eating out and she can't eat at the table," joked

DeGrezia of her dog's new affinity for breakfast out on the weekends. "It's a great way to spend time with your best friend. 'Bone appétit!'"

Got a favorite eatery? Let us know! Email eabreu@dailyrecord.com

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RESTAURANTS

Enjoy dog-friendly dining opportunities at these and other Morris County restaurants:

Morristown Deli — 7 Elm Street, Morristown; call (973) 267-3766 or visit www.morristowndeli.com (<http://www.morristowndeli.com>)

Potbelly's Riverside Cafe — 26 E. Main Street, Rockaway; call (973) 627-7877 or visit www.potbellysrockaway.com (<http://www.potbellysrockaway.com>)

Luigi's Italian Restaurant — 434 Ridgedale Avenue, East Hanover; call (973) 887-8408 or visit www.luigisitalianrestaurant.info (<http://www.luigisitalianrestaurant.info>)

Soho 33 — 33 Main Street, Madison; call (973) 822-2600 or visit www.soho33.net (<http://www.soho33.net>)

Heritage Grill — 18 Broadway, Denville; call (973) 983-9600 or visit www.heritagegrill.com (<http://www.heritagegrill.com>)

Panera Bread — 30 International Drive South, Mount Olive; call (973) 426-9200 or visit www.panerabread.com (<http://www.panerabread.com>)

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