

Crab's Claw Inn dishes fun drinks, fresh seafood

By Kimberly Mollo —
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Nestled in the beautiful seashore town of Lavallette is The Crab's Claw Inn, a favorite hangout of locals and visitors alike.

The bar and restaurant is open seven days a week, with plenty of seafood and landlubber specials to satisfy any craving. If you're looking for a drink to cool you down after soaking up the rays on the beach, The Crab's Claw is sure to have an ice cold beer or specialty cocktail that's right up your alley.

Manager Aileen Gulino said the establishment has been serving patrons in Lavallette since 1979, and has since won its way into the hearts of many residents and summertime visitors.

Gulino described The Crab's Claw Inn as a "local family restaurant" that satisfies and entertains crowds all year long.

The curious consumer in me was impressed when I discovered this local hot spot boasts nine craft beers, as well as seven draft beers on tap. If beer isn't your thing, ask the bartender to whip up a dark and stormy, made with Gosling's Black Seal Bermuda Rum and ginger beer, or a voodoo bucket, which is as fun as it sounds — a mix of different Cruzan rums and juices are served in, you guessed it, a bucket, to be shared with friends or enjoyed all to yourself.

Another customer favorite is the frozen colada, Gulino said. Each cocktail comes with a festive straw featuring beach-themed characters, like a smiling dolphin.

The Crab's Claw offers live entertainment seven nights a week during the summer. For the earlier crowd, look out for Frankie Fingers on the piano four days a week.

Gulino also mentioned to me that the restaurant hosts a magician from 5 to 8 p.m., Monday to Wednesday, during the summer for children.

After taking a lap around the bar and dining area and sitting down for a refreshing, sweet strawberry daiquiri, I could see right away that The Crab's Claw Inn is a relaxing destination for people of all ages. Local couples enjoyed dishes



Photo by Sueanne Goss

like the crispy Asian tuna sandwich and the seafood-packed triple steamer pot, and patrons young and old sampled the craft beers and cocktails at the bar as Frankie Fingers set a calm mood on the keys. Next to the piano sits an old fashioned popcorn machine that hearkens back to nostalgic summers gone by.

The staff is friendly, attentive and helpful — even if you spend far too much time pouring over the menu, like I did.

The Crab's Claw also hosts private parties, and offers an upstairs room, their main dining room and their porch for you to entertain guests.

Although you have to wear shoes and a shirt to be served at The Crab's Claw, nothing is stopping you from working on your summer glow on Lavallette's beaches before traveling just a few blocks inland for lunch, dinner or drinks at this beloved town gem.

Ask a local or a longtime summer visitor and they will tell you, it just isn't a summer in Lavallette without a trip — or two, or 10 — to the Crab's Claw Inn.