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## FOOD

BY TODD SOUTH



The Wet Hen Cafe serves a quiche lorraine with a cup of potato leek soup and an oatmeal cranberry white chocolate cookie.  
PHOTO/ALLISON YOUNG

## Soak it in

**Wet Hen Cafe is described as “American comfort food with a French twist.”** Though the phrase “mad as a wet hen” comes to mind, the cute little brunch space is anything but. Locally produced art, candles, flour sack towels, jewelry and Blind Dog coffee are available for sale, as well as puzzles, books, etc. Seating is cozy and a bit limited, though there are a couple of extra patio tables for warmer months. We felt fortunate to snag a table in between the very busy weekend breakfast and lunch rushes, but you wouldn’t know it from the service. Food arrived amazingly fast, and the staff was very attentive. This is a crew of folks who really seem to enjoy what they’re doing.

There are a variety of breakfast dishes, sandwiches, salads, soups, quiches and other baked goods to choose from. We started with a plate of biscuits and gravy (\$8.25), two biscuits topped with country gravy and three strips of thick-cut bacon from a choice of that or breakfast sausage in link or patty form. The bacon was perfectly crispy, and the biscuits fluffy, though the slightly pasteey gravy was improved with a bit of salt and pepper.

All of the other plates ordered were served with an excellent oatmeal-white chocolate-cranberry cookie. Further confirming the place’s baking prowess, a warm slice of bacon and sautéed onion Quiche Lorraine (\$6.95) was cheesy, savory goodness ensconced in an impeccably flaky crust. Having grown up with my mom’s legendary pies, I have a deep respect for a crust of this caliber.

The *Le Fromage* (\$8.95) grilled cheese sandwich is tomato with cheddar, jack and Swiss cheeses and a bit of spicy mustard on grilled sourdough—simple, but perfectly executed. Another grilled sandwich, the *Conquest* (\$10.25), combined roast beef, sautéed

mushroom, purple onion, bell pepper and Thousand Island dressing on Parmesan-crustured sourdough. Again, it was nothing extravagant but oh-so enjoyable. Pro tip: order both and split them with a friend.

The day’s lunch special was a super hot-from-the-oven crock of three cheese macaroni (\$12.95) with ham, cheddar and Swiss cheeses, topped with shredded Parmesan and toasted bread crumbs. It was served with a cup of soup. I chose potato leek, although hearty chicken, cream of mushroom, and clam chowder made for a tough decision. The crouton-topped soup was very creamy, well seasoned—with a bit of enjoyable peppery aftertaste—and the leek’s alliumness showed through.

Having enjoyed the oatmeal cookies, we ended our meal with a slice of warm apple pie (\$4.50) and a chocolate espresso cookie (\$1). The slice of pie was dusted in powdered sugar and unsurprisingly every bit as good as the quiche. Layers of thin-sliced, tart apple were combined with plenty of cinnamon and spice—not too sweet—and a crust as flaky as a roommate perpetually late on the rent. The thick cookie’s texture was reminiscent of a dark chocolate brownie, with espresso beans baked in. I really liked the oatmeal cookie, but this morsel was a level up.

You can advance order whole pies or quiches—which I plan to do—and they do catering as well. In a town with a ton of options for brunch, this family-run enterprise has managed to beat the odds and kept up its level of quality and service for a decade. My only regret is not having become a regular years ago, something I aim to correct. □

## Wet Hen Cafe

3979 S. McCarran Blvd., 657-8880

Wet Hen Cafe is open Tuesday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Learn more at [wethencafe.com](http://wethencafe.com).