

Photos by ANNE STOKES

by MATT CRAGGS

# Chason's Crab Stadium

**Taste happiness—by the pound**

An Elk Grove staple for more than six years, Chason's Crab Stadium hooks locals with fun drinks, family dining and fresh seafood dishes.

In the warming spring sun, Chason's patio serves as an oasis of brightly colored cocktails. The flamboyant Japanese Pink Panther is candy-in-a-glass, while the Lychee Martini strikes a more boozy tone of vodka and fresh lychee juice without sacrificing the fruity frill and neon allure.

The bar inside is a popular stop for sports-watching over pints and appetizers—such as jalapeno poppers. Thick jalapenos—filled with more crab than cream cheese—are lightly fried, a

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virtual lesson in how best to avoid mushy, greasy, limp poppers. Crunchy and creamy with a kick, it's bar food done right.

The bar gives way to a dining room clad in brick and dark wood with metal accents—corrugated galvanized walls, bucket light fixtures and water tumblers. Beneath a large fishing mural, the room gives off an industrialized, maritime feel.

It's the servers and smiling families that bring warmth to the space as piles of seafood are passed between plastic crab bibs. The kitchen stocks live lobster, clams, crawfish and crab—which features in their signature dish, House Garlic Butter Crab.

When the two-and-a-half pound, whole Dungeness crab—absolutely smothered in butter and garlic—is delivered through the dining room atop a bed of garlic noodles, heads turn.

Owner Peter Phong says the stir-fried, buttery egg noodles in sweet, fried garlic sauce are a popular dish on their own, but nothing compares to tearing apart a crustacean as a family.

Chason's is also known for their jambalaya and Classic Gumbo, which Peter says are the best in town. Both include chicken, andouille sausage, shrimp, bell peppers, onions and rice, and regular diners know to jazz it up with even more seafood. A heaping pile of lump crab meat atop the Classic Gumbo gives the dish a fresh, lighter feel while still packing on the protein and carbs of comfort food. Add a fried egg and softshell crab to the jambalaya and it's transformed into a creamier taste of the sea.

For those not in a seafood mood, the lamb chops cooked to medium are gracefully seasoned and remarkably tender, sliding off the bone as if they can't wait to be enjoyed.

Finally, a chocolate lava cake tops off any meal. A small Bundt cake separates a pool of hot chocolate sauce from vanilla ice cream, but when the spongy walls are broken and the two meet—magic happens.

Plus, in the coming months, Peter will be bringing this magic and his seafood feasts to Midtown with Bronston's (815 11th St., Sacramento), which will feature a similar menu with expanded offerings in a space triple the size of Chason's.

Until then, Sacramento-area landlubbers need only set sail for Elk Grove to taste the ocean's bounty.

*If you're interested in being covered by Indulge, contact Rosemarie Messina at [rosemariem@newsandreview.com](mailto:rosemariem@newsandreview.com).*



## VIBE

*Casual family dining with a hopping bar in back*

## PERFECT FOR

*Happy hour, live sports and big seafood feasts*

## ASK ABOUT

*Live entertainment such as music, comedians and a classic car show*

## CUISINE COST

*Drinks: \$5–\$13*

*Food: \$5.99–MP*

## LOCATION

*8839 Sheldon Road, Elk Grove*

## CONTACT

*916-688-8885, [chasonscrab.com](http://chasonscrab.com)*

