

## Dinner and a Movie

## Beautiful setting, tasty food at The Rabbit Room

The Rabbit Room, a lovely new establishment in Honeoye Falls, is unlike any restaurant in our area. Europe, maybe. Rochester, no.

Located in the historic Lower Mill building, in space that was formerly Juniper Beans restaurant, it is a study in contrasts: old and new, cool and warm, rustic and elegant.

A talented trio, all from the notable Big Tree Inn in Geneseo, owns The Rabbit Room: husband-and-wife team Andy Penner and Alison DeMarco, and Abby DeMarco, Alison's sister.

"We're happy to be in Honeoye Falls and honored to be here in this historic building," said Alison. "It's a rewarding way to share the history with other people."

Since the scenic village of Honeoye Falls has so much to offer – from the Mill Art Center & Gallery (located above the restaurant) to Oppedisianos Bootery (a great shoe store) – my companion and I opted for lunch.

The midday menu, created and chiefly executed by Penner, serves up a tempting mix of appetizers, soups, salads, sandwiches and wraps.

We started with the "ultimate" onion dip, a full-flavored dip of caramelized shallots and blue cheese. Luscious and robust, the creamy dip came with chewy slices of crusty bread that we dunked and devoured in a heartbeat.

Next, we shared a crab cake salad, an entrée-caliber salad that consisted of four crab cakes over mixed greens. The fresh greens – zipped up with mandarin oranges, sesame seeds and roasted red peppers – delivered a citrus-y bite that came as a nice surprise. But the best surprise? Hands down: the crab cakes. Slightly crunchy on the outside and full of fresh crab flavor on the inside, these melt-in-your-mouth cakes were worth the drive alone.

While we waited for our next entrée, chicken satay pita, we sipped glasses of Smoking Loon chardonnay and reveled in the ambiance.

When our pita arrived, our jaws dropped: the portion was gargantuan. Loaded with succulent chicken, crisp greens, diced cucumbers and crunchy chow mien noodles,



STAFF PHOTO/ADRIAN KRAUS

When they hop to it, they really hop to it: Co-owners of The Rabbit Room are Andrew Penner, his wife, Alison DeMarco, and her sister Abby DeMarco (right).

## Anne Palumbo

DINING OUT



the pita was not your typical store-bought pita. Something of a cross between a flour tortilla and a regular pita, it came folded in half on our plate. Although daunting at nearly nine inches in diameter, we managed to make a sizeable dent, thanks to the delicious flavor of the grilled chicken and the peanut sauce that accompanied it.

All sandwiches and wraps come with a side choice, and we chose fresh fruit.

The colorful medley of blueberries, melon, pineapple, raspberries and orange slices was as good as it gets.

Desserts prepared by The Rabbit Room's in-house pastry chef sounded tempting – carrot cake, chocolate oblivion torte, cherry almond torte and ice cream with fresh berries – but we were simply too full to eat a morsel more.

Dinner is offered only on Thursday nights because the remaining evenings are reserved for special events:

weddings, bridal showers, parties and more. After dining at The Rabbit Room, I selfishly wish they were open more, but it's understandable when their main focus is events. Let I forget, they also cater.

Nevertheless, I will return for dinner. The menu, though not extensive, is creative and thoughtful: filet mignon (or N.Y. strip) with red wine demi-glace, Mediterranean chicken, grilled tuna with sesame-ginger sauce, flounder and crawfish over southern-style corn, and portabella towers layered with ricotta, roasted red peppers and artichoke hearts.

There's also lighter fare, such as Caesar salad with chicken or goat cheese tart, if you're not up for a big meal.

Another draw? Live music every Thursday, and plenty of places to sit at the bar.

First impressions matter, and The Rabbit Room registers a lovely first impression. Simple but elegant table settings, handsome beams, hand-carved wooden bars, big windows filled with oversized urns, roughhewn cement walls with original artwork, wide open doors, splashes of sunlight...I felt transported to a European villa. I wanted to get married all over again so I could hold my reception

**WHAT:** The Rabbit Room  
**WHERE:** 61 N. Main St., Honeoye Falls (Note: Clover Street is presently closed near Route 251)  
**PHONE:** (585) 582-1830  
**HOURS:** Lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tuesday to Saturday. Dinner, Thursday only, 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.  
**PRICE:** Lunch entrees, \$6.50 to \$11. Dinner entrees, \$14 to \$22.  
**OTHER:** Wheelchair-accessible, plenty of parking, major credit cards accepted.

there.

The owners worked hard to return the circa 1827 grist mill to its natural elements, and it shows. Look closely at the concrete wall nearest the back patio, and you can see the words "seed, grow, dairy." It's mind-boggling to think how long ago those words were written.

Adam, our server, was wonderful: fast, friendly, menu-astute. But his attention to detail was what stayed with us most. As he was clearing our table, he picked up my wine glass, noticed a smidge of wine, and put it back down. "There's still a sip in there," he said with a smile, "I'll be back."

You know what, Adam? I'll be back, too.

## Two's company, he's a crowd

Newlywed crasher  
Owen Wilson taxes  
his friends' patience in  
the unfunny "You, Me  
and Dupree."

Owen Wilson slipped into movies in much the same fashion that his character in "You, Me and Dupree" insinuates himself into the home of his best friend and his new wife. "Don't mind me," he drew amiably in "Anaconda" and "The Cable Guy." "You won't even know I'm here," he assured us in "Armageddon" and "The Haunting." By the time he clicked with Jackie Chan in "Shanghai Noon" and clashed with Ben Stiller in "Meet the Parents" and "Zoolander," he had grown on us. Like a stealth houseguest, he crashed overnight on our multiplex couch – and 10 years later, his name is on the front door.

Wilson's claims to fame – the laid-back vanity and ingratiating surfer-dude shtick – were arguably at their peak power in last summer's "The Wedding Crashers," in which he played a serial sweet-talker. "Dupree" clearly wants to cash in on



Couch tripping: Housemates Owen Wilson, Kate Hudson, and Matt Dillon in "Dupree."

## Erich Van Dussen

MOVIE REVIEW



some of that romp's residual charm (it might well have been titled "The Newlywed Crashers"), but without a cohort of similar comic zest – Stiller, for instance, or his "Wedding" partner Vince Vaughn – Wilson can't overcome a thin script and too-predictable plot twists.

## Rent Check

Owen Wilson's blink-and-you'll-miss-him role in "The Cable Guy" (1996: PG-13 – violence/mild sexuality) is just one reason to watch (or re-watch) this fine, underappreciated black comedy. At the time, Jim Carrey was "stretching" as a comically villainous cable installer who forms an unhealthy bond with a customer (Matthew Broderick). The main story is still fun, but catching small performances from future stars including Wilson, Jack Black and Janeane Garofalo (not to mention Ben Stiller, who directed) adds a we-knew-them-when satisfaction.

We see everything coming 20 minutes ahead of time, and it isn't pretty.

Wilson's Dupree is essentially a live-action version of Zonker Harris, the tan-happy "Doonesbury" comic-strip character who has spent the last 30 years improbably earning our affection by refusing to earn a living. The Best Man at Carl's (Matt Dillon) wedding to Molly (Kate Hudson), Dupree shows up at their doorstep, post-honeymoon, with a stuffed moose head but without a job. He'll be off the sofa in a few days, he swears, though in the meantime he might order premium cable and burn down the living room.

## "You, Me and Dupree"

**Cast:** Owen Wilson, Matt Dillon, Kate Hudson.  
**Directors:** Anthony Russo and Joe Russo.  
**Rated:** PG-13 (guidance strongly suggested for children under 13), for mild adult content, brief nudity and language.

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