

Nobscot's Cafe

847 Edgell Road • Framingham, MA 01701 • 508-788-8040 • www.nobscotscafe.com

By Nancy Brumback

Nobscot's Cafe is the classic neighborhood restaurant and bar. A casual, no-frills atmosphere and friendly service are combined with well-prepared comfort food to deliver great value in tough times.

You'll have to look for Nobscot's. It's tucked into a small shopping center off of Edgell Road, a couple of miles north of the Route 9 commercial district. The exterior is a basic storefront; we weren't even sure it was open when we stopped for lunch one Saturday. Once inside, there's a large dining room to the right, while the ample bar area is to the left. At lunchtime, only the bar area was open.

The decor is basic Irish pub. Neon beer signs, but also wonderful old photos of Framingham dot the walls. In an open area where Nobscot's offers live music every Friday night and sometimes other nights as well (check the website for performers and dates), there are dart boards for amusement when the bands aren't playing.

Flat-screen televisions on all four walls provide a view of the game from any seat, and the afternoon we were there, the sound was set just right. If you wanted to catch a part of the action, you could hear the game, but the sound was turned low enough to permit conversation in a normal tone of voice.

The day's specials are featured on a chalkboard when you come in.

My husband picked one of those, a pastrami sandwich for \$5.99. I debated longer over the sandwich menu,

intrigued that the chicken and turkey offerings claimed to be freshly-cut breast slices, not pressed, deli-style turkey. The friend who had recommended Nobscot's had indeed noted that her turkey sandwich had been piled high with "real turkey."

In the end, though, I decided on a grilled hamburger, \$6.29, and splurged with the addition of sauteed onions for 50 cents.

Sandwiches here start at \$3.50 for grilled cheese and \$3.99 for a BLT and go up to \$7.99, \$10.99 if you want an open steak sandwich. And they all are served with french fries. It's not much more expensive than McDonald's and tastes way better!

The pastrami sandwich was a large portion of very lean meat on grilled bread, while my hamburger was cooked as ordered, and had the appealing uneven look of a handmade patty rather than a uniform, frozen one. It was very good.

Our server, noticing my husband had polished off his sandwich while I was only half-finished, thoughtfully asked if he'd like coffee while I finished. He would.

While we enjoyed our lunch there, Nobscot's does a brisk dinner business as well, and we plan to try it some evening when fixing dinner just seems like one more chore.

The dinner and sandwich menus are available throughout the day.

Appetizers run \$3.49 to \$7.99 for typical fare—buffalo wings, onion

rings, potato skins, spinach and artichoke dip with homemade potato chips. Our you can order a mixed plate of "a little of everything" for the table for \$9.99.

There are a couple of soups each day; clam chowder and minestrone the day we were there. And garden or Caesar salads to which you can add chicken or shrimp.

Most dinner entrees fall between \$10.99 and \$15.99, and that includes a potato, vegetable and small salad with most of the entrees. A house specialty is marinated steak tips, \$14.99, and other choices include a roast turkey dinner, veal parmesan, and broiled sirloin steak. But the widest selection is seafood, ranging from baked haddock to fried oyster, shrimp, clam or scallop plates to broiled salmon.

The cafe's website posts the dinner specials for that night and the next couple of days if you want to check for your favorite before you go.

Monday nights the owners, Michael Quinn and Paul Handy, offer specials such as a burger for \$3.49 and sometimes there's a line to get in.

Nobscot's offerings are also available for take out, so you can pick up dinner if you're in a hurry.

Nobscot's Cafe has been a neighborhood landmark in its section of Framingham for 16 years, and is worth a trip even if that's not your neighborhood. ■



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