

Restaurant review

# Grendel's a 'den' of quality

Grendel's, 89 Winthrop Street Harvard Square

By Jonathan Kutchins

Grendel's in Harvard Square serves a variety of good quality international food at reasonable prices. Located in what was once the Pi Eta house, the restaurant is divided into two dining rooms: Grendel's Upstairs and Grendel's Den. Both have appetizing menus, and both give good value for your money.

Grendel's Upstairs is very informal, and serves a variety of omelettes, salads, quiches, sandwiches, and crêpes, mostly ranging in price between \$2.00 and \$3.25. Among the more interesting choices are guacamole dip, quiche crabmeat, and crêpes parisienne, which are filled with seafood, shallots, and a white wine newburg sauce.

In addition, Grendel's Upstairs has my favorite salad bar, which is \$2.75 by itself, or \$1.00 additional with any entrée. Besides lettuce, tomato and cucumber Grendel's serves macaroni salad, a shrimp and rice salad, potato salad, cole slaw, kidney bean salad, and green bean salad vinaigrette, all of which are excellently prepared and quite appetizing. Beware of the service, as it can be quite slow at times.

Grendel's Den, located directly below Grendel's Upstairs, is somewhat more formal, although still casual in appearance. It has a more refined atmosphere with attentive and friendly service, but occasionally the noise level resulting from dishes and glassware being carried into the

kitchen is disturbing. There is a fireplace at one end of the room with a warm fire burning in the winter, and stereo background music, which may change from Frank Sinatra to Beethoven at any time.

The entrées range from classic stroganoff and shishkebab orientale to veal cordon bleu and chicken à la kiev to baked stuffed panamanian shrimp and filet mignon. Moussaka is on the menu, and eggplant parmegiana would be a good choice for vegetarians.

The prices are reasonable; from \$4.25 for a half a roast chicken to \$7.75 for steak au poivre, described in the menu as "sirloin steak sauteed in butter, with crushed black peppercorns, shallots, brandy and cream." If you dine at Grendel's Den, ask your server how you can have the salad bar upstairs. It's worth the trip.

Perhaps the best part of Grendel's is their desserts. Pastry chef Christy Timon prepares some of the best cakes and

pastries in this area. Especially recommended are the cheesecake, which compares favorably to Baby Watson's, and the Linzer Torte, which has a raspberry jam filling. (The best part of Grendel's cheesecake is the crust, which is made from ground nuts.)

Finally, Monday through Thursday nights, there are two-for-one specials. Restricted to the same two entrées for two people, you can eat two chicken à la kiev for \$6.75 on Mondays, or two tenderloin mayakovskys (swiss cheese on a skewer wrapped by tenderloin steak) on Tuesdays for \$5.95. This is a real bargain, and combined with dessert is one of the best values in Cambridge today.



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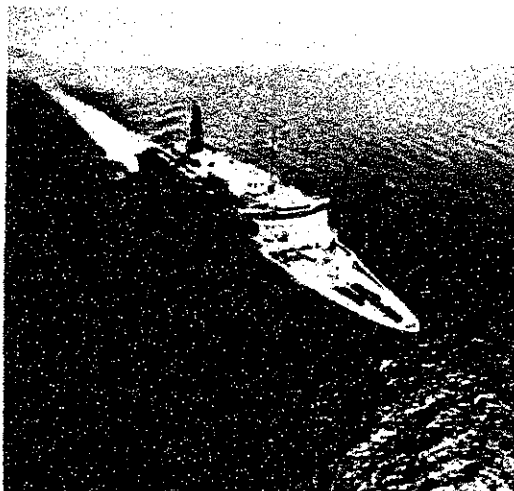
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