

To print this article, choose **Print** from the File menu.

▼ advertisement ▼

Your Library has been ranked 8th
best in the nation!

[Back](http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061116/ART12/61116034&SearchID=73265253015736) to: <http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061116/ART12/61116034&SearchID=73265253015736>

Article published November 16, 2006

Restaurant review: Crystal's ****

Westgate hotel's kitchen turns out some fine meals

So far, I'm batting .400 on my luck with hotel restaurants in the metro Toledo area. I've found three of them to be mediocre, while two others turned out to be unexpectedly good.

In the case of my latest foray — to Crystal's at the Clarion Hotel in West Toledo — the fare, service, and amenities couldn't have been better.

Admittedly, the world of hotel food is a chancy one. Working against the best efforts of the cooks and servers is the transient nature of the business — trying to please travelers and tourists who generally are in a hurry, while catering to local diners who generally aren't. Also keep in mind the number of regular meals and banquet fare that hotel kitchens must turn out during the week, each dispatched quickly and with a cheery smile.

The service at Crystal's was fine, but it was the food that made the bigger impression. It included wonderful soups, gargantuan salads and sandwiches, steak, veal, chicken, and seafood dinners, and on most days, a lavish lunch spread of fruit, salad, soup, and hot buffets, all-inclusive and all-you-can-eat for \$6.99.

This is a restaurant that ought to bring more attention to itself, notwithstanding its hotel location and odd hours. A case in point is the reuben sandwich, which our server touted as "the best in the city." She was entirely right: It's a combination of grilled rye bread stacked high with slices of tender corned beef, sauerkraut, and melted swiss, served with thin, crispy French fries or chips for \$6.25. The reuben dressing listed in the menu description was missing, which hardly mattered.

Despite the harsh overhead lights in the multi-level, leisurely arranged dining room, the sleek architecture creates a feeling of comfort with upholstered furniture, a couple of banquettes, round cloth-wrapped columns, and deep green carpeting.

The soups included chicken noodle (\$1.75-\$2.50) subtly seasoned with garlic, and Mediterranean vegetable afloat with shrimp dumplings. One of several appetizers was crispy buffalo bites (\$5.99), coated with a mildly tangy sauce. Among the dinner salads is the Clarion cobb (\$7.99), practically a buffet unto itself. It's a mountain of greens blanketed with ham, turkey, cheddar, mozzarella, chopped hard-boiled egg, and vegetables — too much for two people, let alone one.

Equally daunting were the chicken pita (\$5.95), a hefty combo of grilled chicken, sautéed mushrooms, onion, pepper, and mozzarella with torilla chips, sour cream, and salsa; a deep-fried cod fillet (\$5.79) about the size of my arm but too thickly breaded, and a deluxe club (\$6.50) containing three meats and two cheeses on a crusted hoagie roll.

The 12-ounce strip steak (\$17.99) was well-cooked and juicy, but people with bigger appetites may opt for the \$19.99 T-bone, a full pound's worth of eating.

Contact Bill of Fare at fare@theblade.com

Crystal's

- Address: 3536 Secor Rd., Toledo, in the Clarion Westgate Hotel.
- Phone: 419-535-7070.
- Category: Dress down.
- Menu: American.
- Hours: Breakfast: 7 a.m. to noon Monday-Saturday, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday. Lunch: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday-Friday. Dinner: 5 to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Full dinners are available from 5 to 9 p.m. Monday-Saturday in the Brasserie Lounge. Alcohol is available in the main dining room only after 5 p.m. through the week. Reservations are accepted.
- Wheelchair access: Yes.
- Smoking section: No.
- Average price: \$\$.
- Credit cards: AE, Dis, MC, V.

