

FOOD & DRINK



Hoagie's hero It's more than just a sandwich for lunch at Mollyz.

photo: Robin Hart Hill

Falling for Molly

Liz Feltham has a love affair with a hoagie, an all-day breakfast and a specially made sundae.

THE FIRST THING I NOTICE ABOUT MOLLYZ DINER is that it doesn't look remotely like a diner; it looks like a somewhat upscale restaurant with character oozing from every nook and cranny. Over here, a propane fireplace set in a brick chimney. Over there, cobalt blue vases along the wall, uplit for dramatic effect against the satiny mocha textured plaster walls.

And the character continues into the menu, where the theme of "z" is evident (nacho**z**, burger**z**, and so on). It's clear a lot of thought has been put into the details. Eartha Kitt is singing in the background (at least, her CD is playing), and we quickly feel quite at home, despite the fact it's full of what are obviously regulars—they're greeted by name, they ask for their "usuals"—while we are Mollyz newcomers.

There are plenty of the usual suspects in the appetizer section, from mussels to deep-fried pepperoni. We go straight to mains, and go with the Indonesian hoagie (\$8.69) and the all-day breakfast (\$5.96). This sub wasn't prepared by your typical sandwich artist—spicy, tender beef is piled on the softest roll and laden with onions, mushrooms and cheese. I could marry this sandwich. I ask for sweet potato fries on the side, and they come with a spicy hot dipping sauce that's ideal for both fries and sub. The breakfast is just as good, with toast, eggs and fries making room for ham and bacon. It's offered with either ham or bacon, but as my friend is a worshipper of the almighty pig, she asks for both (bacon as a side, \$2.96). The side of bacon is four strips of thick, smoky, salty meat; it's just delish. I can't imagine a hangover that would not be cured by this breakfast.

For dessert, there are quite a few cheesecakes on the menu, which don't catch my eye tonight—I always try to have a dessert that's made in the restaurant, and we're told the

cheesecakes aren't. There's blueberry pie, which is made here, but I'm not feeling the pie love. Until, that is, we ask if there's anything else and she humours me by saying she'd be happy to make us a blueberry pie "sundae" (\$4.96). She heats up the pie, and returns with a glass layered with warm pie and French vanilla ice cream, which we have no problem scarfing down. (The "sundae" is not a regular menu item. If the idea tickles your fancy, you'll have to ask).

A word about the menu here. A lot of menus in Halifax are just not that interesting to read; I know it isn't always easy to find a unique way to describe the same foods and hence the profusion of phrases like

"grilled to perfection" and "mouth-watering." Some menus are riddled with spelling and grammatical errors ("Striplion," anyone?), which seem as though the food is an afterthought; others are so full of detail it's hard to figure out what anything is. But Mollyz menu is from a creative mind, striking a great balance between original and gimmicky. Some items that catch my eye include "Dan and Norval's High Octane Chili" and the "Boss Cholesterol Explosion Burger." There's also a section of internationally inspired pastas, called "Tour d'Pasta," featuring temptations like Baja Beef and Moroccan Penne, and I like that vegetarian dishes are clearly marked. (Although it must be pointed out, the menu is not without fault—"desertz" is missing the second "s," as in, "dessertz").

On the way out, I heartlessly forget my newfound love, the hoagie, and set my sights on a hot hamburger sandwich. It looks fabulous all smothered in dark, rich-looking gravy, and even has green peas on top. Next time, I vow, as I tear myself away. ▣

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Mollyz Diner
2104 Gottingen Street
405-3376
Sun-Thu 7am-9pm
Fri-Sat 7am-12am