

## A Slice of Life at Pasquale's

By Howard McEwen  
For The Sunday Challenger  
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*Loyal Fans Enjoy Hoagies and More*

**BELLEVUE** - Simple food is good food.

The Fessler family in Bellevue has been offering simple, good food at their Pasquale's Restaurant since 1960.

### The Mood

This isn't four-star eating. Ordering is done up front, where you pay before getting your food. You're given a number on your receipt, then you take your seat and you wait. And wait. But it isn't too long and as stated right on the menu: "Each order is individually prepared when ordered and take a little more time. So, make yourself at home while we prepare your order to assure you the finest food possible!"

And it's no problem to wait. The restaurant is comfortable. It's a storefront building from the early 1900s. It has been made modern with refurbishing, yet the tin roof is still in place. The seasonal fall decor is minimal, but adequate. There isn't gaudy kitsch or road signs hanging from every available blank space on the walls or in a nice change of pace from almost all restaurants today—a television blaring at you. If you're with the kids they'll actually look at you instead of the tube. With seven booths and a few tables, Pasquale's seats about 40 and its large front window looks out on Bellevue's picturesque Fairfield Avenue.

Just about the time you're ready to look at your watch, one of the kitchen staff calls out your number and brings a tray with the food on it. This night it was a tray of hoagies.

### The Food

Ron Barth, who grew up with Pasquale's and now serves as mayor of the small city of Woodlawn, swears by the hoagies and fried mushrooms.

"As a kid growing up, we'd collect bottles for the deposit. Once we had enough it was right to Pasquale's for a hoagie and fried mushrooms. And you can't forget the cocktail sauce. They're the best."

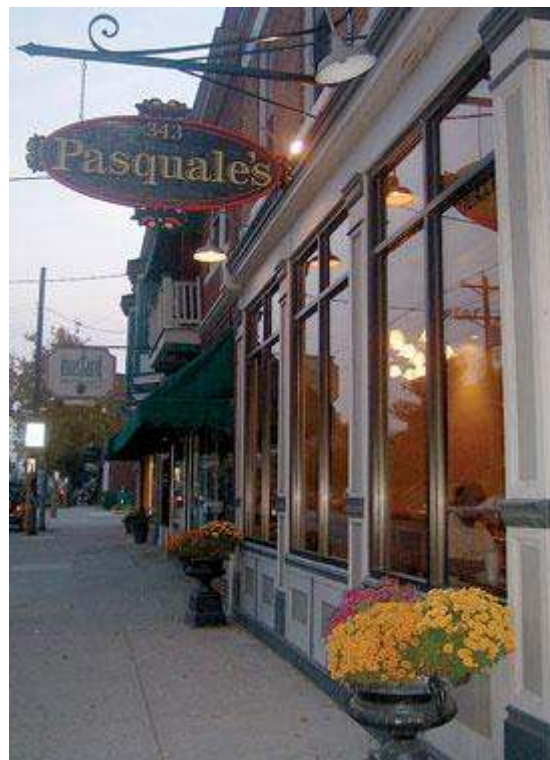
Mayor Barth was right.

The hoagies and mushrooms come in a paper boat. The Hoagie Supreme was built tightly—not a sloppy mess tossed together haphazardly, as other restaurants sometimes do. The taste was layered. The flavor of each of the Italian meats came through the Italian dressing. Even at a late hour, the hoagie's tomatoes, onion and lettuce looked and tasted fresh. The menu wasn't lying.

The fried mushrooms were also flavorful. One problem with fried anything is the grease, which was thankfully lacking at Pasquale's. (Maybe the paper boat serving dishes help this.) The fresh taste of the mushrooms was another surprise. Often the breading overwhelms the taste of anything, but here the breading was not too heavy and seasoned nicely. It actually complements instead of overwhelmed the mushroom flavor. The fried cauliflower that was mistakenly brought to the table was the same way—tasting like cauliflower with breading, instead of just breading.

The French fries, while nothing special, are large, ripple-cut portions of potato. They are served in a wax paper bag that would be perfect for carrying the fries and snacking on while walking around Bellevue's active downtown area. The city's is full of charming little storefront shops—two doors down from Pasquale's is a new "tea room" with tables set for high tea.

The cole slaw that rounds out the platter is served in a little plastic tub. Like the hoagies, it's not too sloppy. The dressing definitely



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**READY TO GO:** Diners at Pasquale's can feast on fresh-made hoagies, cole slaw and even fried cauliflower.

has a spicy kick, but it isn't overdressed, with the cabbage still crisp.

The most expensive hoagie platter that includes an eight-inch hoagie, slaw and fries, costs \$6.75. The generous order of breaded mushrooms that easily feeds four cost \$2.99.

Bellevue residents have been ordering from and praising Pasquale's for 45 years. They've been picking up hoagies and pizzas on the way home from work or stopping by after ballgames or just ducking in for a snack. To Pasquale's, their neighbors are their lifeblood. They are also the best endorsement for anyone looking for a place to grab a nice bite.

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