

DAKOTA COUNTY'S 25 OLDEST RESTAURANTS, BARS AND SALOONS

With the oldest restaurant/saloon in Dakota County about to celebrate 150 years in the same location, we set out to identify and recognize Dakota County's 25 most historic restaurants and bars. Aided by some helpful crowdsourcing from loyal patrons and eager researchers, we assembled this list of institutions collectively totaling over 1,500 years in business.

Having survived economic downturns, world wars and even pandemics, you will notice some of these historic businesses have changed names or owners a time or two over the years. But one thing has not changed: the hard-earned success that comes as a result of old-fashioned service, quality, value and hard work.



1. King's Place Bar and Grill, Miesville (1874). Home to 115 different burgers, King's operates in an historic building that first housed a saloon and restaurant starting in 1874. While the name on the outside has changed over the past 150 years, the excellence inside remains the same. For more info: <https://kingsplacebar.com/about-us/>

2. Jersey's Bar and Grill, Inver Grove (1906). Previously known as Duke's, this two-time winner of the Twin Cities Burger Battle attracts customers from far and wide for great food and live music. For more info: <https://jerseysbar.com/>

3. Polish National Alliance, South St. Paul (1909). Not just one of the oldest but also one of the most unusual, this throwback bar is tucked away in a basement and is sometimes referred to as "Dakota County's best kept secret." For more info: <https://www.facebook.com/PNALodge1033>



4. Tapper's Pub, West St. Paul (1914). Bartender Tommy offers this quick pitch for Tappers: "People love the lack of parking, the surly bartenders, the pull-tabs, and the homemade pizzas."

The Coney Island Pizza—sliced-up hot dogs, onion, and mustard—has won neighborhood-wide acclaim and is also an Atkins family favorite.

For more info: <http://www.tapperspubwsp.com/>

5. Croatian Hall, South St. Paul (1919). Croatian immigrants who settled in South St. Paul founded the Hrvatski Dom, which means Croatian Home. It quickly became the place for social events such as dances, dinners, weddings, and even funerals. For more info:

<https://www.croatianhall.org/>

6. Southview Country Club, West St. Paul (1919). The original 16 members of this club pitched in both cash and backbreaking work, building the golf course with their own labor and that of any volunteers they could persuade to pick rocks, rake sand and cut trees. For more info:

<https://www.southviewcc.com/about-us>

7. Al's Corral Bar and Grill, South St. Paul (1922). A proverbial hole in the wall, seekers of cheap beer, good company, and solid food will feel right at home at this hidden gem. For more info: <https://www.facebook.com/alscorralbar/>

8. Wiederholt's Supper Club, Miesville, (1929). Now in its fourth generation of family ownership, Wiederholt's transports diners back in time at Minnesota's most old-school supper club. For more info: <https://www.wiederholtssupperclub.com/our-story>

9. Jameson's Irish Bar/Cherokee Sirloin Room (1933). Formerly the elegant Cherokee Sirloin Room, this relatively new arrival opened as Jameson's just in time for St. Patrick's Day in 2021. For more info: <https://www.facebook.com/Jamesonirishbar>



10. Gallagher's Bar, West St. Paul (1934). Myrtle Gallagher, a widow with three young children, founded Gallagher's (a/k/a The White Elephant) in the depths of the Great Depression and grew it into a Twin Cities favorite. It remains in the family to this day. This is also where Grandma Atkins would occasionally go when she was raising three kids as a single mom and needed a break. As the story goes, Grandma A would say she was going to pick up some eggs... then come home with no eggs. For more info: <https://gallaghersbarwsp.com/>

11. Bugg's Bar, South St. Paul (timeless). We could not find the date Bugg's opened, but it has been around a really long time.

12. Axel's, Mendota Heights (1941). Formerly the Parker House, it became Axel's when it was purchased by Linda Young and Charlie Burroughs. Linda's parents, Janette and Axel, both worked at the Parker House. For more info: <https://axelsrestaurants.com/>

13. Castle Rock & Roll Bar and Grill, Castle Rock (1944). Good, affordable food, with a great fish fry and limitless popcorn makes it the best restaurant and bar in Castle Rock... and the only one.

14. Vasatka-Goers WWII VFW Post 6680, Mendota (1950). Founded in April of 1946, the VFW post was named in honor of the first soldier and airman from the area who lost their lives in World War II. The building itself went up in 1950 and provides everything you'd expect – inexpensive beer, a popcorn machine, old-fashioned bar fare, and a friendly bunch of regulars.

15. Bogey's Lounge, Lilydale (1956). Originally known as Dandy's then Sibley Lounge, Bogey's displays the most impressive wall of police patches in Dakota County.

16. Dan's Bar, New Trier (1960). Three generations of Dan's make Dan's three times as special, starting with Dan the founder in 1960, Danette the daughter, and in 2013 granddaughter Danielle, who completed culinary school and now brings delectable new approaches to classics. For more info: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW3wR3c6G6Q>

17. Drkula's, Inver Grove (1960). Like Dan's, Drac's remains in the family, with the fourth generation of the Drkula family now pitching in. For more info: <https://www.dracspub.com/>

18. Pool and Yacht Club, Lilydale (1960). Perched on the shores of the mighty Mississippi, the P&Y is quaint, private supper club with a pool that takes you back in time.

19. Stein Haus, Vermillion (1960). Snugly sandwiched between a church, rectory, city hall and old town hall, the Stein Haus' fish fry made KARE11's list of Minnesota's very best. It is also where I picked my best-ever fantasy sports team in 1997. For more info: <https://www.steinhausmn.com/>

20. Little Oscar's, Hampton (1960). A classic diner, Oscar beckons travelers along Highway 52 as much for its iconic building as for its delicious scratch-made cinnamon and pecan rolls. For more info: <https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/minnesota/longtime-icon-restaurant-mn/>



21. House of Coates, Coates (1962). It's all about the Swanee Burger for me... and for MN Monthly. The magazine placed the half-pound Swanee on its "Ultimate List of Minnesota's Greatest Burgers." For more info: <https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/minnesota/house-of-coates-mn/>

22. Fireside Lounge, West St. Paul (1962). The “Cheers” of West St. Paul, this may be the friendliest place you’ll ever dine. For more info: <https://www.fireside-lounge.com/information/our-history>

23. L.W.’s Bierstube, Hastings (1962). On December 15, 1962, Lawrence William Yanz opened a bar and restaurant that continues to be known for its Reubens, bratwursts, heart steak, and garlic toast. For more info: <https://thebierstube.com/hastings-bierstube>

HONORABLE MENTIONS. The spots below are historic and just as terrific, but have not been operated continuously like the establishments above.

24. Trophy House – New Trier. Voted by WCCO viewers as home to the Twin Cities’ Best Fish Fry, this family-owned establishment cooks up classics in a building constructed in 1870. Had it not been operating so long as a grocery store instead of as a restaurant and watering hole, it might well have topped this list of oldest restaurants, bars and saloons.

25. Duff’s Bar, Vermillion. While all the food is solid, it is the perfect pizza that coaxes customers to return again and again to this residence-turned-restaurant built in 1880.

26. R Bar, Randolph. Like Duff’s, the R Bar’s construction took place in 1880. Unlike Duff’s, where pizza rules, the R Bar’s claim to fame is mouthwatering BBQ.

27. Roundup Bar, Hampton. The Roundup is located in a building constructed in 1899. During a ride-along I did with the Sheriff, we stopped in at the Roundup to check on a surprising claim involving the use of balloons. Alas, that’s a story for different Top 25 list.

28. Celt’s, Inver Grove. Formerly Club O’s and O’Neill’s and Strueber’s, Celt’s has gone by more names and had more owners than any other establishment on our list. This is understandable, though, because the building that houses Celt’s harks back to the early 1900’s when the City of Inver Grove Heights was merely a village.

You probably noticed that our list plowed right past the promised 25 places, tallying 28 top restaurants, bars and saloons. Like the lengthy list of baseball-branded burgers at King’s Place in Miesville, which now surpasses 60 savory selections, we just couldn’t bring ourselves to stop.

Speaking of stopping, please swing by these mostly mom-and-pop stops to keep them going strong, to ensure more generations get a chance to enjoy their exceptional quality, value and service.