



John Hall's Goal Post

Tackle Their Skins, Wings and Ribs and
Score a TD with Their Signature Drinks

The building that houses John Hall's Goal Post has been a part of Port Charlotte's façade for at least 20 years. As a kid, I can remember dressing up to eat at the buffet restaurant there because it was the nicest place in town to have dinner. Years later, the building became home to a diner, a salad bar and, most recently, a steakhouse and seafood restaurant. For one reason or another, none of these places stuck. As the building sat empty month after month, I began to wonder if the place was cursed; that is until the entrepreneurial minds behind Harpoon Harry's and Smugglers Restaurants joined forces with well-known NFL star John Hall to bring us the new Goal Post Sports Bar and Grill.



As my friend Kim and I walked into the Goal Post, we were immediately greeted by the manager, bartender and various wait staff, as is the custom there. We walked past a dozen plasma TV's featuring every sport you can imagine. The night we were there, monster truck racing was on in one section of the room and the Red Sox were playing to a crowd in another. No girls in bright orange shorts here, just the cutest referees this side of a powder-puff football game.

I have to admit, the Goal Post is my place. Everyone has a restaurant or a bar where they go to be with friends, where they know the menu inside and out, and where, if you're lucky, your favorite drink is waiting for you before you even make it to the bar. Such is the Goal Post. And it's so much more than your average sports bar, offering great food at reasonable prices.

In the sporting world, a hat trick is defined as succeeding at anything three times in three consecutive attempts. This is also true for the appropriately named appetizer that came piping hot and larger than life to our table: loaded potato skins, crisp on the

outside and stuffed with gooey cheese and smoked bacon, better than your average buffalo wings and spicy southwest egg rolls, all served with homemade ranch and honey mustard dressing. I'm partial to the egg rolls and have been known, on occasion, to order a plate full of them. Our next appetizer was a heaping plate of the best garlic teriyaki wings you'll find in town. I like to think of myself as a lady, but when I'm around good chicken wings I'm like a five year old with chocolate ice cream on a hot day. Thank goodness for wet naps!

After surveying the massive amount of food in front of us, and with more to come, Kim and I asked our lovely waitress to invite the folks at the bar to join us. A few minutes later, two gentlemen sat with us at our table, not knowing what they were getting themselves into. Light conversation between strangers quickly turned into jokes and shared drinks, like the almond crème, a new twist on the white Russian and Kim's and my favorite, the 5-Yard Line, made with passion fruit vodka and Midori. The men were a little less adventurous, with one of them calling Amstel light "magical."

Photos by Spencer and Greg Pullen

The Stiff Arm Rack is a stack of ribs with just barely enough room on the plate for a side of fresh green beans sautéed in garlic and a perfectly baked sweet potato with cinnamon butter.



As our entrees came to the table, our new guests were just as excited as I was to see the huge plate of ribs coming toward us, so large that the waitress had one of the men from the back carry it out. The Stiff Arm Rack is a stack of ribs with just barely enough room on the plate for a side of fresh green beans sautéed in garlic and a perfectly baked sweet potato with cinnamon butter. The ribs fell off the bone and were seasoned with a spicy rub and finished with tangy sweet BBQ sauce.

We also ordered the Pitch Out. Tender chicken, melted provolone cheese, thick bacon, avocado, a juicy slice of tomato and crisp lettuce made up this club sandwich that could easily have fed both Kim and myself.

Although we seemingly ate everything in sight, there was still dessert to contend with. You want me to eat a Volcano Bomb and Bump and Run Cheesecake after all that food? Sounds like a challenge to me! As the Journey song *Don't Stop Believing* played in the background, this girl huddled with her new team, and like the true champs we are, tackled the ooey gooey chocolate molten cake, complete with vanilla ice cream. Then we dug into the rich, creamy cheesecake covered in tangy mango and raspberry puree. Not ready to end the night, we did exactly what should be done at a sports

bar; we called up some friends to join us, took a seat at the bar and stayed way longer than expected.

As we closed the Goal Post down after making new friends, my sincere hope is that the Goal Post can beat the odds and become another Port Charlotte mainstay. Don't stop believing indeed!

John Hall's Goal Post is located at 3575 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte. Hours of operation are Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to midnight and Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. For more information, call (941) 979-9933 or visit www.goalpostgrill.com. HARBOR STYLE would like to thank PJ Rodriguez and his staff for providing our reviewer with such a fantastic evening. |



John Hall's Goal Post's

Pitch Out



6 ounce chicken breast
2 tablespoons avocado, mashed
2 slices of provolone cheese
3 slices of bacon
2 slices of tomato
3-4 leaves of lettuce
2 slices of sourdough bread
Salt and pepper, to taste
4 toothpicks

Cook bacon in a skillet over medium heat, turning occasionally until it's crisp. Transfer cooked bacon to a paper towel to drain off excess grease.

Season chicken breast with salt and pepper and cook in the same skillet for 3-4 minutes on each side over medium-high heat. Alternatively, chicken may be cooked on an outdoor grill if one is available. Once chicken is done, let stand for 10 minutes and then cut into thin slices.

While chicken is cooling, toast the two slices of sourdough bread. Once toasted, spread avocado onto both slices. Top one slice of bread with the chicken, bacon, provolone cheese, lettuce and tomato. Place the other slice of bread on top.

To serve, insert one toothpick into each quarter of the sandwich and slice in half both ways. ■■