

Wait 'til you getta load of Gotham Bagels



MIKE DeVRIES/THE CAPITAL TIMES

Gotham Bagels' Mix and Match combo features a half bagel sandwich and soup or salad for \$7. Pictured here is homemade butternut squash soup and a half Brighton Beach sandwich, topped with lox, cream cheese, watercress, tomato, red onions and capers.

GOTHAM BAGELS

Address: 702 S. Park St.

Phone: 467-7833

Web site:
gothambagels.com

Hours: 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday; 6:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday; 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday

Notes: Parking is available on the street in front until about 4 p.m. St. Mary's adjacent ramp is available as a parking option; take your ticket into Gotham to be stamped for free parking. But be aware: The hospital complex is still working out the bugs in its electronic parking system.

By **SUSAN TROLLER**
The Capital Times

Gotham Bagels provides fast food for the soul, with from-scratch preparation standing squarely behind every grab-and-go meal sold.

There are the bagels themselves — a dozen varieties of big, delicious, hand-rolled New York-style bagels served solo or filled with various sandwich fixings — plus homemade soups (with vegetarian or vegan options available every day) and salads.

A former Gothamite himself, owner Joe Gaglio knew what it was like to be homesick for food.

"Yeah, I used to buy bagels when I went home, freeze 'em, ship 'em or carry 'em back to Madison on the plane," the ebullient Gaglio said with a laugh.

Now, as the owner of Gotham Bagels — with an outlet in the new St. Mary's complex on South Park Street as well as his original store at 112 E. Mifflin St. — Gaglio is clearly delighted to share his passion for good food with his talented staff and anyone who walks through the door.

"We got bagels and you don't! What can we do for you?" he boomed out to customers on a recent visit.

A culinary arts professor at MATC, Gaglio knew his quest to bring the bagels he loved to the mass-

es in the Mad City would require a close study of both ingredients and techniques.

As part of that mission, he shipped jugs of Madison water to New York for analysis and studied dozens of recipes. As it turns out, the H₂O flowing in New York and Madison is pretty similar, dispelling the myth that it's New York's water that creates the texture and flavors that make its bagels the envy of the world.

"We worked with guys who are the best bagel makers in New York and wound up combining their recipes," he explained.

But Gaglio also knew it would take more than an authentic recipe to create the kind of satisfying food he had in mind.

"You can't cut corners on the ingredients, and you've got to have people who care who are making the food and working with the customers," he said.

For Gaglio, that means choosing plenty of seasonal ingredients, and high-quality, sustainably raised seafood, chicken and meats.

"It costs more to bring in wild-caught salmon from Alaska or to make our own cream cheese from scratch, but the customers can tell the difference," Gaglio said.

The managers and cooks at Gotham Bagels are some of Gaglio's former students who share his

quality, made-from-scratch mantra. The to-die-for hot pastrami is made from Gotham's own recipe, and the slices of chicken on any sandwich begin as a homemade roast, created and cooked in-house.

There's plenty on the extensive menu for under \$7.70; we'd particularly recommend the Mix and Match for \$7 — a combo of any of about a dozen half sandwiches, paired with either a homemade soup or salad.

We loved the half Brighton Beach, a pretty, open-faced bagel served with lox, caper cream cheese, watercress, red onion, tomato and capers. We ate it with a large and delicious bowl of butternut squash soup with sage and walnuts.

Gotham sells juices that are fresh and homemade, too — 16 ounces for \$3.

There's a mint/pineapple with a touch of serrano pepper that's frisky and unusual; freshly squeezed orange and grapefruit juices; and a house-steeped cranberry/lavender beverage. A friend loves the cranberry, and I'm a big fan of the pineapple concoction, which is tasty and healthy.

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Have a suggestion for "Let's Eat for \$7.70"? E-mail 77tips@madison.com.