

The OFFICE

RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

**820 Main Street,
Toms River
732.349.0800
www.theofficelounge.net**

by Nicole Piccoro

I've passed by the Office Restaurant and Lounge in Toms River about a million times. Located on Rt. 37, right off of exit 82 on the Garden State Parkway, you can't miss it! I've read about and heard plenty of good things about the restaurant: great sushi, a fun-filled happy hour, good service, and a variety of dinner deals. I finally got a chance to venture inside to see what all the fuss is about.

As it turns out, the great buzz about The Office is 100% true. It seems that even in the colder months, while some restaurants struggle, The Office is packed with locals. After all, locals do know best!

Before actually going to the restaurant I checked out their website

(theofficelounge.net). It seems like a great place to dine on Monday with some of my girlfriends. The website informed me, that along with many other specials, Monday night is ladies night. This means that ladies receive half priced dinners after 8pm. If this meal is as enjoyable as I expect, I'll have to plan a "girls night out" for the near future.

My companion and I ventured over to the restaurant on a Thursday night in March. Before I even got inside I was pleased with the amount of parking spots. There is nothing worse than going out to a restaurant, and having to park down the road. The spacious parking lot put me in good spirits for what was to come.

Just as I expected, the restaurant was packed. Even though they seemed to be busy, we were seated right away, at a comfortable table in the corner. Within the restaurant there were plenty of seating options. The waitress, and the rest of the staff were friendly and accommodating. She handed us our menus, and gave us a few minutes to look.

Bring your appetite and your reading glasses because the portions are huge, and the choices are endless! If you're an indecisive person, this may not be the place for you. However, I am a big fan of options, and this menu certainly offered nothing less. On top of the extensive menu, there were 2 full separate pages of daily specials alone. The food at The Office ranges



from homemade soups, salad, and sandwiches, to sushi, to all kinds of chicken, pastas, steaks and everything in between.

As an appetizer, we settled on something off of the sushi menu. We opted for a Rainbow Roll, which consists of crabstick and avocado surrounded by a few different kinds of fresh raw fish. I'm always a little skeptical of ordering sushi at a restaurant that doesn't specialize in Asian cuisine, but just as I expected The Office did not disappoint. The fish was fresh, and the roll was sizeable. We also ordered a shrimp cocktail which came to the table before we even got our entrée orders in. The shrimp were pretty large, and there were 6 of them. I think 6 is the perfect number for a shrimp cocktail, because it's the easiest number to split evenly between a group.

For the main course I ordered from the specials menu. A Prime Rib served "au jus" with a choice of fries, linguini, mashed potatoes, or a baked potato was my selection. As my side I selected fries after spotting some at a neighboring table. My

companion was in the mood for a chicken dish, so he ordered Chicken Marsala off of the regular menu, which came with the same side options. Both meals came with a salad. As stated earlier both dishes were large. The Prime Rib was juicy and cooked to my liking. The flavoring was of the best I've had in a while. My friend enjoyed the chicken as well. Even though the portion was large, his plate was empty by the end of the meal. You can tell that the meals are made fresh, and with care.

Overall, it was a pleasant dining experience. The food arrived in a timely manner, and was filling and delicious. The staff was polite and helpful, and the atmosphere was a comfortable. The Office Restaurant and Lounge is a great place to dine with family, friends or even a date. Aside from the great food, they also have some of the best bar specials. Time and time again, our readers have voted The Office as Ocean County's best happy hour. Stop by this Friday after work, and see for yourself!