

On our plate: Martha Lou's Kitchen

photo // Carly Knight-Carrier



Getting off the bridge onto Morrison, just under a mile along, there's an old, brightly painted home-like structure resting between an abandoned lot and dead patches of grass at 1068 Morrison Drive. Across the front of the building is "Martha Lou's" written like Chicago's logo, matching the mural on the side of the woman herself.

It looked like the perfect place for my girlfriend and I to try. When we entered, an older woman swiped the cigarette from her lips to greet us. As we chose our seats toward the back of the small, narrow room, stuffed with six tables and a kitchen the size of a walk-in closet, our waitress took two blank printer sheets of paper to write the menu in blue pen. With every word of our order, our waitress did not speak, but sang and danced to collect what we would like.

We loved the atmosphere. The soul food shack displayed numerous historical African-American leaders, focusing on 44th President of the United States of America, Barack Obama. There were framed pictures of him and portraits of him in the oval office. Flowers and candles were placed around his portrait. As well, a shelf on the back wall, behind where I sat, was a shrine to the day former World Series MVP and Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Reggie "Mr. October" Jackson ate at the joint.

Could a restaurant advertising having fed a baseball legend disappoint? Of course not. It was fantastic.

Martha Lou went into her kitchen to create art. After ordering the fried chicken, cornbread, mac and cheese and red rice, I knew my assumption rang true. The large chicken breast, served

on a paper tray, was fried perfectly. The homemade style of the food created a nostalgic feeling in a place I had never been before.

I was able to ignore the Christmas-themed lights hitting the top of my forehead in the corner of the restaurant due to the best cornbread I have had to date. Normally, the chipped paint and small tables would put me off. But, for lack of a better phrase, it felt like a home. The feeling of the restaurant was reminiscent of having dinner at a friend's house for dinner. It was a happy, fun atmosphere filled with the smell of the best chicken on Morrison Drive.

All meals at Martha Lou's total out to \$15, an incredible deal for one meat and three sides. All meats are fried, with the choice of chicken, pork chop or fish.

In Charleston, it's heavy competition to deliver a good meal. Food is the cornerstone of the city, Martha Lou lets the food do the convincing of why the colorful soul food restaurant is still standing in a competitive market. I haven't eaten everywhere, but I'm hard pressed to remember a time that I enjoyed a meal like I did over the weekend at 1068 Morrison.

The staff was welcoming upon arrival and friendly as we left. Leaving Martha Lou's Kitchen with our to-go boxes did not leave us with the same feeling of leaving any other restaurant. It felt like I had just finished coming back home.

I expected an acceptable fried chicken with half-care service. I left with an experience to remember and to recommend to others. I will be going back and going back soon -- this time to order more, stay longer and experience the wonderful, exciting home like restaurant that is Martha Lou's Kitchen. --Adam Duffy



PICKS AND PEEVES

Jack Rogers Co-Editor in Chief

Pick: Cheerwine

Born and bred in the Carolinas, this nectar of the Gods is unmatched in the soda world. Nowhere else will you find a soda so consistently refreshing, southern and crisp. Also the fact that it is available at ever Cracker Barrel in the country makes it able to be found throughout the lower 48.

Peeve: Fake analog film effects on digital pictures

Look, I get it; shooting and developing film isn't easy and it isn't cheap. But apps like "Huji" that give your digital picture that "vintage" feel just annoy me. No, your picture of you at a boat party doesn't really look like it was taken on film and no, it does not add any artistic value to you and your scantily clad friends. You spent a thousand dollars on that iPhone camera; stop using an app to make it worse.

TV show: *Goosebumps* ('95-'98)

I'm pretty sure at least 90 percent of our generation grew up reading this series. And if you haven't seen the TV show, you're in for a treat. Featuring child actors such as Ryan Gosling and Hayden Christensen, this show has some of the funniest poor acting I've ever seen. It is truly the ultimate '90s show: hilarious practical and special effects, awful (but funny) cinematography and half of the episodes in no way resemble the books. I'd have to recommend all of the "Night of the Living Dummy" episodes, "Say Cheese and Die" and "Shocker on Shock Street." And yes, it is on Netflix!

Album: *American Beauty*

I picked up this CD in a thrift store a while back, having heard of the Grateful Dead, but never got around to listening to them. On a very long road trip out west this past summer, I decided that I should probably put in the CD I had never even listened to, and it honestly changed my life. I will never forget crossing the expansive prairies of Montana listening to this truly indescribable Americana-Folk-Psychedelic experience. Listening to "Sugar Magnolia" as I wound up the curving to Glacier National Park, "Truckin'" across lakes and rivers and grasslands, and crossing through the occasional "Box of Rain." This album is a constant reminder that life may be down on you now, but it'll look up soon.

SPECIALTIES

- Fried chicken
- Baked macaroni
- Barbeque ribs

PRICE RANGE



SUGGESTED

- Gillie's Soul Food
- East Side Soul Food
- Nana's Seafood and Soul

1068

Morrison Dr