

Elevated Irish

by [JENNIFER LITZ](#) Jun 11, 2008

When is an [Irish pub](#) more than an Irish pub? When it's Mo's.

Mo's Irish Pub in Noblesville is part of the Mo's Restaurants chain. And this addition to Noblesville's Levinson Lane shopping center definitely lives up to its brand name.

Originally, I wasn't terribly excited about the prospect of another Irish pub. The formula — dark wood, chain recipes, Guinness paraphernalia — leaves some improvisation to be desired.

But the fish and chips here leave nothing to be desired. OK, the fries were a little dry. Not crisp, dry. But that was as irrelevant as *Top Chef* host Padma Lakshmi's arm scar next to the moist, flakey cod, which was cradled in an air-spun Harp beer batter. It's fish that would make anyone wish they were Irish, Catholic or Irish-Catholic.

It's common legend that fish and chips are British fare. The Leeds, England-based Federation of Fish Friers' Web site clarifies that fish and fries were developed separately — the French popularized pommies, of course. But fish and chips were popularized as street food in Britain's industrial towns in the 1950s. The dish has been oft-maligned as that sub-par British food.

Pubs the world over could thusly take cues from Mo's interpretation, which offers up slaw and dill-speckled tartar sauce accompaniments.

This place has a serious knack for reinventing pub food. You've probably shoveled your way through a Shepherd's Pie — maybe even a traditional English one with lamb. But I haven't had one that can hold a candle to this version, with its tender strips of beef. Leeks and fall-apart simmered veggies provide soul-warming depth.

If there's anything that didn't quite impress me, it was my own Rueben boxty. The boxty tucks "Mo's very own slow-cooked corned beef," sour sauerkraut and Thousand Island dressing into a potato pancake, which is then covered in pepper-infused cheese. If you like the above ingredients and long, stuffed things, then you'll probably like this, too.

Other dishes also shone. The spinach tapenade appetizer is the perfect blend of tangy Parmesan, tart artichoke, garlic and the restaurant's secret weapon: cayenne pepper. (That ingredient also brought the stealthy heat — according to bartender/server Nathan — to the Rueben boxty.)

Drinks are good. The crew's all here: Harp, Smithwicks, Strongbow, Upland, Hacker Pschorr.

Bartenders are happy to oblige special requests. At least ours was. Whoever thought to order a martini with bleu cheese-stuffed olives at an Irish pub? My friend. Bartender

Nathan got back there and stuffed them himself. He also tried his hand at my Vodka Chilton: vodka, fresh squeezed lemon juice, club soda and salt around the rim.

And the looks of the place? It's an Irish pub. But with high ceilings, flat screen TVs in an open setting and a stately, tall bar, it one-ups the competition.

**Mo's Irish Pub**

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