

Rockdale Bar and Grill: more than a roadhouse

By Jeff Brown
Reporter staff



Deanna Skjolaas-Garcia took over the Rockdale Bar and Grill in January of 2013. In addition to drinks, the tavern offers hot homemade food and live music. (Edgerton Reporter photo/Jeff Brown)

deck overlooking the creek in the summers, a banquet room available for rentals, and delicious appetizers and sumptuous home-style lunch and dinner specials.

Appetizers include onion rings, chicken wings, cheese curds, shrimp jammers and "Damn Good Taters."

Lunch specials include scalloped potatoes and ham on Thursdays and hand-battered bluegills as part of the all-day Friday fish fry. Skjolaas-Garcia said she likes to try out different dishes for the Tuesday lunch special; past specials have included lasagna and Swiss steak. The tavern also serves home-made pizzas.

There are also sandwiches (pork tenderloin, Reuben, fish file) and burgers, including a mushroom and Swiss burger and the Big Rockdale burger, which features a 10-ounce ground chuck patty.

Dinner specials include homemade pizza on Mondays, surf and turf on Tuesdays, gyros on Wednesdays, and steak and shrimp on Thursdays.

Skjolaas-Garcia holds a meat raffle every Friday night, and donates \$50 from the sale of raffle tickets each week to a local charity.

Skjolaas-Garcia said owning the bar has been rewarding, although not without its perils—she had to put in a new well shortly after she bought the tavern. "Every day is a different day," said Skjolaas-Garcia, smiling.

The Rockdale Bar and Grill is located at 222 Water Street in Rockdale, just south of Cambridge. The phone number is (608) 423-3323.

It's just before noon on a cold and bright Thursday afternoon, and inside the Rockdale Bar and Grill two regulars sitting on bar stools to my left are playing a friendly, rattling game of bar dice with owner Deanna Skjolaas-Garcia.

Behind Skjolaas-Garcia, next to a steaming roaster oven, the cook slaps two pieces of sourdough bread on the grill, then goes back to slicing long strips of raw tenderloin. To my right, a customer glances at a menu as sunlight streams through a picture window overlooking Koshkonong Creek and glints and gleams off the ice and whiskey inside the glass in front of him.

It's a typical lunch hour at the Rockdale Bar and Grill, which Skjolaas-Garcia took over in January of 2013.

In between taking orders over the telephone, Skjolaas-Garcia relates how she worked at the tavern for ten years as a bartender and decided to buy the bar after the former owner, Heather Pupp decided to scale back to working only part-time at the bar. Before she worked at the tavern Skjolaas-Garcia, who grew up just south of Stoughton, worked at Stoughton Hospital.

The Rockdale Bar and Grill continues to be a favorite hangout for motorcyclists and snowmobilers, but Skjolaas-Garcia said the bar offers something for everyone, including live music on the beautiful wood