

Veggie avalanche

Feb. 5, 2006. 01:00 AM

DISH DECONSTRUCTION: This shepherd's pie starts with finely diced carrots, celery and onion softened in vegetable oil and browned with ground beef. To this is added ketchup, HP sauce, worcestershire sauce, basil, oregano, thyme, garlic powder and powdered beef base. This medley is portioned into 9-ounce dishes and topped with homemade mashed potatoes (enriched with milk, butter, salt and pepper) and homemade beef gravy. On the side, baby carrots, yellow and green beans, broccoli and cauliflower plus two packets of optional butter. The plate is dusted with parsley flakes.

TASTING NOTES: This shepherd's pie boasts the most flavour — and now we know why.

OFFICIAL WORDS: "I've tasted many shepherd's pies and I like ours," enthuses corporate kitchen consultant Gavin Neumann. "I like the flavour in it. It has been very successful."

LOCATIONS: Founded in 1987, the Firkin Group says it is Canada's largest pub chain. Each franchise has its own identity. There are 34 Firkins in Greater Toronto, one in Vancouver, and four in the United States in Chicago, Miami, Flint, Michigan, and Colonie, N.Y. Apparently, 148 new Firkins are now in development south of the border.

PUB SLOGAN: "Everyone's a little different. One's just right for you."

Beaver & Firkin, 16 Lebovic Ave. (southeast of Eglinton and Pharmacy Aves.), 416-615-5558. See <http://www.firkinpubs.com> for other locations. Open daily, 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Weekend brunch is served until 3 p.m.

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