

THE EDGE

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by **LAUREN GLENDENNING** • photos by **JEREMY WALLACE**



When a chef's skills are largely attributable to his German grandmothers, you taste the love in every dish.

Chef Jason DeBacker has turned The Edge Restaurant and Bar — tucked away in a condominium building in the Upper Village at Snowmass — into a hot spot for Alpine cuisine featuring German, Swiss and Austrian fare. This type of cuisine is a part of mountain culture, yet there aren't a lot of options for it around the Roaring Fork Valley.

With a slopeside location, the happy hour scene here is an accessible and refreshing jaunt away from the beaten path of the Snowmass Mall or Base Village.

The dining room is cozy — the perfect place to unhook those ski boots and order cheese fondue on a cold afternoon. From 4 to 5:30 p.m., enjoy half-off beer, wine and well cocktails, too.

The fondue is served as a bubbling pot of Emmentaler and Gruyère cheeses with a side of crisp apples, crunchy bread and fresh sausage for dipping. It's everything you'd want in a fondue — rich, gooey cheeses melted with a hint of the German fruit brandy kirschwasser, full of clean flavors and just the right amount of funk from the cheese to keep you dunking your fondue fork back in for more.

Alpine cuisine is comforting, but when there's a story or memory behind each dish, the



PRICES Appetizers, \$8 to \$13; "High Alpine" schnitzel, wurst or fondue, \$18 to \$28; main courses, \$15 to \$35. **AMBIENCE** Mountain chalet, casual yet elegant. **SIGNATURE DISHES** Schnitzel made with pork or veal, three different preparations, with traditional German spatzle; fondue with Emmentaler and Gruyère cheeses; wurst (choice of seven sausages) with sauerkraut and potatoes; seebarsch, a roasted Corvina sea bass with dill cream.

comfort level rises. DeBacker says every plate on the menu is part of his history and heritage.

You can taste it in everything, too — even the side of red cabbage that I'd typically push aside as an inedible garnish at other restaurants. At The Edge, it tastes like apple pie, with the aromas and flavors of cinnamon and sweet apples that could turn even the fussiest eater into a red cabbage lover. And that's just a side dish.

The schnitzel exudes the very

heritage that DeBacker values so much in his cooking. There's a veal or pork option — each served with a crispy coating that seals in the beautifully juicy and tender meat. Top it with the garlic white wine caper sauce for added flavor, or try it "Vienna style" with fresh lemon or with the "Gypsy sauce" with red wine and mushrooms. It's served with that decadent cabbage as well as a lovely German spatzle, a soft egg noodle authentically fried to give it a slightly crispy coating.

Not to Miss

It's **off the beaten path** for a more intimate dining experience.

Cuisine that makes you feel like your **dining in the Alps**.

An excellent cocktail menu featuring **six Moscow mules** and other specialties.

A peppery, marinated and grilled deer had this venison skeptic in awe of the deep-red color and rich flavor.

In a lower-traffic location such as this, where passers-by are much less common, there has to be something special in order to bring people in. Butch's Lobster Bar did it when it lived here for 20 years, and after a few years of soul-searching, The Edge has found its place.

top: Schnitzel, breaded and served with German spatzle, vegetables and a choice of caper sauce, gypsy sauce or Vienna-style.

right: Grilled red deer served with lingonberry sauce. **bottom:** Fondue featuring Emmentaler and Gruyère cheese, white wine and kirschwasser served with crispy bread, apples and sausage.