

## Mystery Muncher

## Sandwich shop is a cut above

## Ioannoni's Specialty Sandwiches

624 E. Basin Rd., New Castle, Del.  
302-322-5000.

**Hours.** 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays.

- No smoking.
- Wheelchair-accessible.
- Cash only.
- Take-out available.

**Price range.** Figure \$5 or so for a 10-inch sandwich. The 21-inch version is about \$10. The chicken Philly cheese steak with bell peppers and mushrooms runs \$13.

**Parking.** There is a decent-size lot in front of the restaurant.

**What's the story?** Thirty-two-year-old Michael Ioannoni and his father, John, opened this specialty sandwich eatery about a year ago, working to make it, as proclaimed on their menu, "not just another sub shop." They have quickly garnered a reputation as the place to go in northern Delaware for authentic roast pork, roast beef, chicken cutlet, steak and veal sandwiches, and for belly-filling subs,

too. Most of the original recipes here have been handed down from John's mother and grandmother.

**The scene.** A small army of employees scurries back and forth behind the counter within the exposed kitchen at this clean and simple storefront shop. The real atmosphere is in the aromas: garlic, rosemary, au jus, sizzling chip steak and more garlic permeates, creating a tantalizing sensation from the moment patrons walk through the door.

**What we had.** I was assured by an Ioannoni's fanatic that I would find pork and beef as good as any renowned place in Philly — and I did. The pork, roasted daily, garlicky as all-get-out, and properly seasoned, was served on a homemade, toasted sesame-seed roll. With broccoli rabe and sharp provolone, the 10-inch sandwich cost \$6.35. Aged roast beef with mild provolone was fork-tender, simmered for hours in its own juices and served on a homemade Italian roll (10-inch, \$5.85). I also tried a few bites

of the thinly pounded chicken cutlet supreme, coated with a zesty breading and topped with more of that bitterly good broccoli rabe and sharp provolone (\$6.15). To further complement this filling (and fulfilling) trio of sandwiches, I had an accompanying side of "hots" and one of "sweets" — each (\$1.25) batch of roasted peppers swimming in a pleasant sea of oil and garlic.

**Chef's suggestions.** Mike Ioannoni recommends trying a spizzata — tender veal cubes on a roll in a red sauce with a blend of seasonings (10-inch, \$5.50/21-inch, \$11), or his sausage sandwich with sweet green peppers (\$4.85/\$9.50).

**Nice touches.** Most everything is made right there — the sausages, meatballs, the red sauce, even the rolls are baked fresh daily.

**After you eat.** Enjoy horse racing at nearby Delaware Park. Or, walk off your meal along the historic cobblestone streets of New Castle, and take a tour of the many quaint houses and museums that are open to the public year-round.