

Happy hour in Tahoe not what it was in the 1980s

By Kathryn Reed

Poor college students talk about the abundance of ramen noodles consumed. Poor recent college grads talk about the happy hour deals that make for a meal.

In a quest to relieve my 20s in Tahoe when happy hours were where I often found dinner, I thought I would see what things were like 20 years later. Disappointing would be the primary word of choice.

So many bars and restaurants no longer offer deals, and if they do, most are not substantial. And some only have winter bargains. In other words, it's gouge the tourist and locals this time of year.



Happy hours in Lake Tahoe aren't what they were in the late 1980s -- but there are still fun drinks being made at some locations.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

It seems like an odd business model. Don't they realize if you

reel people in with a deal, the majority will end up spending more money after the discount hour is over and that people are more likely to frequent the place that has a deal?

While we couldn't hit every place, below is what we found this spring and early summer. Please share with *Lake Tahoe News* readers where you like to go for happy hour.

Drinking establishments

Thinking I would be nice and drive all the way to Meyers, I asked Kim to find out what Divided Sky had as a happy hour special. A buck off drinks, but wine is not included.

We thought we could do better.

Without checking on the deal, we headed to Steamers on this particular Friday. The deal – if you could call it that – was 75 cents off any drink. The deal ended at 6pm.

Those deals do beat the 50 cents off drinks at the Flight Deck at Lake Tahoe Airport.

MacDuff's in South Lake seemed a bit put off when Roni asked about happy hour deals. The waiter said it was a dollar off beer – that's it.

A different South Lake Tahoe restaurant – Fresh Ketch – has happy hour deals that are pretty substantive in that a regular glass of the house Cabernet is \$9, but during happy hour the price drops to \$4. The Ketch has happy hour Monday-Friday from 3-6pm. Another good deal is Sunday through Thursday there are special prices on one type of drink – which is different each of the five days.

Don't bother going to Sunnyside for happy hour – this Tahoe City restaurant says it does not need to discount drinks.

Brooks' Sports Bar in Stateline isn't the place to go either – at least not now. The golf course restaurant only has specials

in winter.

Another great lakeside setting is West Shore Café in Homewood, but when Sue and I were there they had yet to come up with a happy hour menu.

Drinking at lunch is the best deal at Las Panchitas in Kings Beach. As long as food is ordered, draft beers are \$2.50 and Dos Equis are \$3.

During what they call their early bird specials (4-6pm), margaritas are \$3.50, a 16 ounce Dos Equis \$3.50 and Bud \$2.50. This compares to full price of \$3.50 for domestic beer, \$4.50 for Mexican beer and \$6.50 for margaritas.

At Blue Angel Café in South Lake the daily happy hours are from 11am-noon and 3-6pm where the house wine is \$3 – regularly it's \$5. Draft beers are \$1 off the regular price that ranges from \$4 to \$6.

Traveling on to Stateline, at Sul Lago the draught beer, house wine and well drinks are two-for-one Sunday-Thursday from 4-5:30pm, and 4-5pm Friday and Saturdays. This deal is only in the bar area – not if you are sitting at one of the dining tables.

A few hours on a hot farm have me and Kim in search of liquid refreshments in Truckee. Sue meets us at Moody's where the beer, wine and well drinks are \$2 off. Regular prices for beer run \$3.50 for Bud to \$6 for Stella. Wines are normally \$5 to \$13 a glass.

Two days later and Sue and I need to cool off after mountain biking at Northstar. We stop by the Cabana Bar next to the roller skating rink. Max the bartender has created the Downhill Cruiser. It's the perfect complement to downhill cycling – rum, tequila, citrus flavors, Sierra Mist and a lime wedge for \$8.75.

PBR and Coors Light are always \$3.75.

This bar has various specialty drinks throughout the summer, but unfortunately was not open the next Monday afternoon when I stopped by again.

Thinking Friday Station had a happy hour, Brenda and I went to the top of Harrah's. No luck. Good views, pricy drinks, no deals.

It's a Thursday at Après Wine on Ski Run in South Tahoe – this means happy hour all night for the women in the room. Featured whites, reds and roses are \$4, featured Chardonnay \$5, featured Pinot Noir \$5 and beers are \$3 and \$4.

Hours for regular happy hour during the week are from 4-6pm and 9-10pm.

Food to absorb the drinks

A meal can be had at Blue Angel Café in South Tahoe during the daily 11am-noon and 3-6pm happy hours. House salads go from \$6 to \$3 and a cup of soup from \$4 to \$3. To add to those, a plate of fries is \$3 during happy hour (regularly \$5) and garlic bread is \$3 (regularly \$8).

Plus, this Ski Run Boulevard restaurant has specials throughout the week, like \$4 tater tots on Mondays from 3-6pm and \$2 tacos on Tuesdays during the same hours.

In Kings Beach, Las Panchitas has deals between 4-6pm. Small nachos are \$3.50, small quesadilla \$3.50 and they take 25 percent off Mexican combo dinners.

Back on the South Shore, at Sul Lago in Stateline the Italian bangers, appetizers and small pizzas are half price in the bar during happy hour. Those hours are Sunday-Thursday from 4-5:30 and Friday-Saturday from 4-5pm.

Fried zucchini at the Fresh Ketch is one of my favorite

appetizers. I wink and call it health food. The portion has decreased substantially over the years, but the batter and size of the individual sticks have improved tremendously.

It's best to go during the Monday-Friday 3-6pm happy hour because that's when a plateful costs \$5. Otherwise you will be paying twice that amount any other time.

Happy hour at Moody's in Truckee starts at 3pm. The two food specials are the Pub Burger and Mozzarella, Basil, Tomato Pizza – each for \$10. Regularly they are \$14 and \$13, respectively.

Nothing was left on the plates after Sue, Brenda and I tackled the strawberry bruschetta and Greek cucumbers at Après Wine. The former is a unique dish that we all recommend. Happy hour price is \$4, regular \$7.95. Cucs are good, but discount isn't great – a savings of 95 cents.