



A selection of some of the gourmet fresh-baked treats featured at Crazy Alice's Café.

Written by: **Sara Mullins**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**



Down-home, Uptown Dining at Crazy Alice's Café

Crazy Alice's Café, a small eatery located in the heart of Uptown Somerset, has become a big hit with diners, from locals to tourists to travelers just passing through town. Located to the rear of the Glades Court Mall on West Main Street, the café offers an extensive array of breakfast, lunch and dinner options, Monday through Saturday. "Blackboard Specials" include coffee and other drinks, along with daily features, and a nearby glass display case tempts diners with fresh-baked treats like scones and cookies. Take-out and delivery are available with advance notice, a private room below the café provides seating for up to 30, and patrons can enjoy outdoor dining along Main Street. Large windows, eclectic furnishings, and artistic accents create a bright, fun and inviting atmosphere for patrons in the main dining area. Adding to the décor are photos on display from the Laurel Highlands Photography Group.

The friendly staff at Crazy Alice's Café (left to right): Kayla Jano, Susan Gerber, Erin Gross, Stew Ireland, chef/owner, Crazy Alice Ireland, owner/operator, Jessica Wilt, catering specialist, and Brittany Stiles.

It's a labor of love for owners Alice (of course) and Stew Ireland, whose motto, "Down-home cooking with an Uptown flare" has been the operative principle of the Café since it opened in 2008. A focus on fresh, healthful ingredients and careful presentation, along with courteous service, has attracted a steady stream of patrons. Rave reviews of the Café on web sites like Urban Spoon, Yelp and Facebook have helped. Four years later, the café is thriving.

With varied menus offering diners a wide range of choices, the Café can cook up something for everyone. Until 11 a.m., diners can enjoy breakfast favorites like omelets and pancakes, or sample one of the Café's "Crazy Concoctions." The lunch menu offers Stew's Soups & Stews, Crazy Alice's Favorite Salads and Doc's Gourmet Dogs, along with a variety of sandwiches. The Uptown Dinner features fish, seafood, chicken, pork, beef and vegetarian

dishes, all accompanied by fresh bread and pastries, house salad, veggie of the day, and a choice of garlic smashed potatoes, Stew's Mac & Cheese or penne pasta aioli. The Café offers diners the option of BYOB.

"We just know what we know how to do," says Alice. "We work all the time, but we love what we do. It's a passion for us." Stew is head chef, while Alice is the general manager.

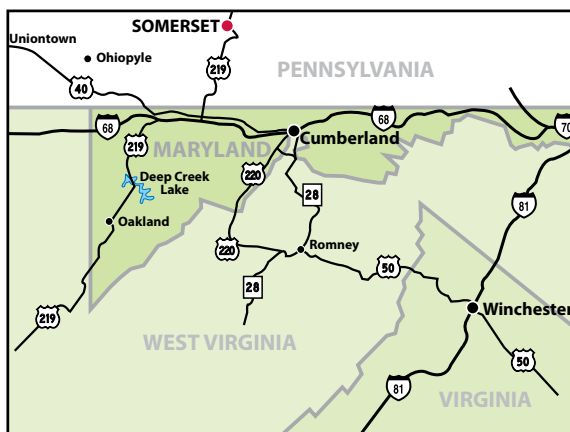
The couple's combined 60 years of experience in the food service industry has played a significant role in the Café's continuing success. Both had previously worked for a large venue in the Lancaster, Pa., area. When Alice came to Greensburg as a corporate trainer for the Olive Garden, she traveled through Somerset, and everything changed.

"I fell in love with the area," she says. "We decided that we needed a big change, and so we moved here." After a period of consulting and working at the former Ramada Inn, she and Stew opened the Café. Alice says, "The name came from us sitting around with our kids thinking up names...one of the kids yelled 'Crazy Alice's' and we all said 'Wow, that's catchy and we could have a lot of fun with that name.' So it stuck."

In addition to the Café's regular dining operations, Alice and Stew offer extensive catering services. With the motto "Any Event, Any Time, Any Place," they focus on customized menus and affordability. Catering is now one-third of the Café's total business.

Somehow, besides running a full-time restaurant and catering service, Alice finds time for community service. She serves on the Board of the Somerset Inc. Community Development Program, volunteers with New Day Inc. counseling services, and helps to maintain Trinity Park, where the Café occasionally offers a popular "Dinner in the Park" where diners can BYOB and enjoy live music.

"We love Somerset," Alice says. "It's a nice community. We – the Café and town – take care of each other. We really have fun here."



Crazy Alice's Café, 814-443-6370, is located in the Glades Court Mall at 101 West Main Street, Somerset, PA and is less than an hour drive from Deep Creek Lake and Cumberland, MD.

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- June 9-10 Heritage Days Open House
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- June 24 Fort Hill 75th Anniversary
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Dash plaques, goodie bags, etc. 10 - 4
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