


Finally Ours

Hidden to
few, home
to many



Seasonal meals, specialty dishes and debatably the best garbage plates in Upstate New York, Finally Ours is a local hidden gem that is rarely tried by outsiders — but it should be on Yelp for some of the best food in the Syracuse area.

Written by Maddie Rhodes | Photo by Zoë Green

The sun has barely risen at 6 a.m. when the owners pull up to their restaurant with 10 cars waiting in the parking lot. Regulars filter in once the doors unlock and sit down for their morning routine of coffee, breakfast, and lunch to-go.

The front door hardly shuts until they're closed as farmers come in to start their day, doctors in scrubs stop by after they finish their night shifts, and locals stay longer at booths to finish their unlimited refills of hot black coffee.

While the restaurant kitchen has been warm since the morning, co-owner Lisa Laffin has hardly sat down to eat a bowl of yogurt during business hours. Her husband and co-owner David only ate a raspberry Pop-Tart all day.

This is just a normal day at Finally Ours.

On the weekends the specials list by the main entrance is filled with meals such as Cajun cornbread benedict, Utica greens crab cake, apple jack french toast, pot roast omelet, as well as seasonal options such as stuffed pumpkin pancakes or apple fritter French toast.

"Some of the things that they come up with, I think in my head, 'I would never eat that,'" David said. "And people love it," Lisa continued.

The pair met while working at another local diner 25 years ago. While they have been working together ever since, they only started their own business seven years ago.

The two finally bought a place of their own after working for other people for 40 years. Lisa refers to the restaurant as "our way." The food, service, and loyalty are all their own.

"Working for ourselves, it's totally different than working for someone else," David said.

The place has a family atmosphere to it. Many dishes are named after their three children or extended family. Two of their children still work at the diner, but that's not the only family in the restaurant. One of their staff workers refers to herself as "their adopted child."

Sarah Annable has worked at Finally Ours for five and a half years and swears by the food.

"Our garbage plates are phenomenal. They're better than Rochester," Annable said.

The term 'garbage plate' is coined by Rochester and comes most traditionally with a hamburger on top of french fries and macaroni salad.

While garbage plates are hard to come by in Syracuse, Annable claims that they're better than the best.

Some of their breakfast plates come with hashbrowns, eggs, a biscuit, fried steak, and covered in sausage gravy. Their lunch garbage plates come with fries, macaroni salad, and meat sauce.

But you don't need to get a garbage plate to try their mouthwatering home fries. The home fries are grilled to perfection with an

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—Lisa Laffin

unmatched, crispy crunch. Buttered toast usually comes along with them, still warm and toasted flawlessly.

You'll be able to gawk at other food coming out of the kitchen, whether it's stuffed French toast or their enormous frittatas.

One thing is a guarantee, you either need to come in with an appetite or you will be leaving with enormous leftovers.

Lines are out the door on the weekends, but not just for the food and friendly staff. Inside is a modern take on a diner with gray walls and black stools. While the original building had red and black checkers across the wall, David and Lisa transformed the space into a restaurant that feels like home.

"I wanted it more comfortable and cozy when you came in. More like a home, you come in and you sit down and you feel like you're at somebody's house," Lisa said.

While David and Lisa are still working every day of the week, they plan to step back within the next five to seven years. They're unsure if their family will take over the business after them, but they are adamant that the option is there for their children.

Whether you're looking for a filling meal or a homey atmosphere, stop by Finally Ours, where everyone is treated like family.