

JUST WHAT DOCTOR ORDERED

By Tammy Jaxtheimer
Restaurant Critic

Maroon's Café is a refuge in the Sentara Princess Anne medical complex in Virginia Beach.

The counter café, open since November, offers weekday breakfast and lunch in the comfortable setting of tables and chairs that one would envision for a café. A suspended television allows customers to catch up on the news.

You can eat in or take out, but a lot of folks call or fax their office order (\$10 minimum) for delivery within a 10-mile radius. Maroon's menu, weekly specials and its catering packages are listed at www.maroonscafe.com.

Our visit was on a cold, rainy day, and we felt compelled to try the homemade chili (\$2.50 cup, \$3.50 bowl). We appreciated being asked if we wanted it topped with cheese. The shredded cheddar-topped chili had a pleasant balance of spice, as well as ground beef to tender beans. For those who like it spicier, a bottle of hot sauce is self-service at the counter.

Tuna salad with a cup of soup (\$5.95) combo attracted me for the chance to experience multiple tastes and for the menu-listed muenster cheese on the sandwich.

I ordered it on wheat bread, instead of white or a roll. The bread was a hearty complement to the moist tuna salad seasoned with dill. I spent my first few bites thinking about how fresh the crisp lettuce and tomato slice were, then I noticed that Swiss cheese had been substituted for muenster. I asked and it turned out that muenster is no longer an option. Although I like Swiss on corned beef, pastrami and ham, I don't prefer it with tuna. They happily replaced the Swiss with provolone.

Soup of the day, mushroom and wild rice, was hot and good, however not one that I will crave because of the canned mushrooms. I look forward to trying chicken gumbo and chicken and dumpling. In my follow-up telephone call with owner Wendy Blais, I learned there's a new soup, Hawaiian seafood chowder, which I also want to try.

From "bistro sandwiches," beef and blue (\$7.50) sounded unique and appealing, and it was. A baguette was filled with roast beef -



Wendy Blais is the owner and operator of Maroon's Cafe in the Sentara medical complex off Princess Anne Road in Virginia Beach.

blushing pink - gorgonzola crumbles, red onion, pepperoncini and lettuce and gently dressed with Italian dressing. Homemade mustard-dill potato salad, chosen over pasta salad, and a crisp dill pickle spear completed the pleasing lunch.

We decided against dessert when we discovered that the desserts were commercially prepared, except for cookies, which are baked there. We didn't feel the need for something sweet since the bleu cheese and dill seasoning remained as pleasant tastes in our mouths.

The eatery also carries candy bars, gum and other sundries for

the spot

1950 Glenn Mitchell Drive, No. 105, Virginia Beach

the vibe

Breakfast and lunch cafe with eat in, take out and delivery

the deal

Soup and salad combo for \$5.95

to try

Beef and blue bistro sandwich with gorgonzola, red onion and peppers

the dish on Maroon's Cafe

Hours Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Prices Breakfast wraps and bowls \$4.95-\$5.55, biscuits and bagels 95 cents-\$2.95, soups \$2.25-\$3.50, salads \$5.95-\$7.95, sandwiches \$5.95-\$7.95, dogs and sausages \$2.50-\$4.25, desserts 55 cents-\$3.50.

Reservations Yes

Child friendly No booster seats or high chairs; kid's grilled cheese and ham sandwich \$3.99.

Smoking Smoke-free café and "Sentara Healthcare Campus"

Handicapped accessible Yes

Contact (757) 689-4989

nearby office workers.

When I drive my daughter to summer field hockey camp, I'm seeing Maroon's as my refuge for the early mornings. Coffee, breakfast wrap and e-mails in an inviting venue sound like a good way to spend my waiting time.

Tammy Jaxtheimer,
flavor@pilotonline.com