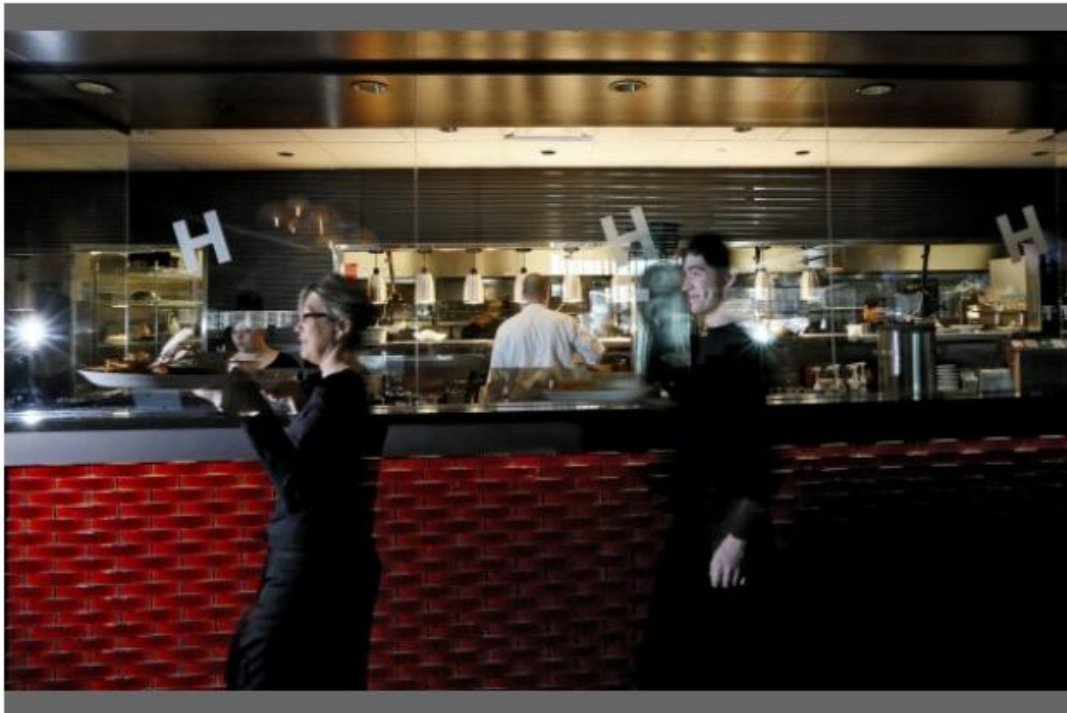


# The Columbus Dispatch

## On Restaurants | Houlihan's returns to central Ohio

After hiatus, restaurant's back in central Ohio with prototype revamped menu and up-to-date decor



ERIC ALBRECHT | DISPATCH

Servers Tammy Collins and Danial Helton carry platters past the kitchen at the new Houlihan's in Upper Arlington.

By [Denise Trowbridge](#)

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Houlihan's has returned to central Ohio after a six-year absence.

But the restaurant that opened March 11 in the Kingsdale Shopping Center in Upper Arlington doesn't look a whole lot like its previous incarnation.

The Kansas-based restaurant company unveiled what it has dubbed a prototype for a new style of its restaurants — smaller, with sleek interior and exterior finishes, and a revamped menu.

“The ambience and decor are certainly more contemporary and current than they were years ago, but the commitment to quality and execution of the food and beverage is still the focus,” said Anthony Roberts, general manager of the new Houlihan’s.

The menu has been slightly altered and streamlined specifically for this location, “but we have upheld the scratch concept, and everything is produced in-house daily,” Roberts said.

The menu features an assortment of appetizers, entrees, soups, sandwiches and salads.

Appetizers include steamed organic pot stickers with ginger-pork filling; white bean and artichoke hummus; seared tuna wontons; goat cheese and artichoke bites; and jumbo stuffed mushrooms with horseradish sauce. There’s more: a sliders platter with choice of three mini-sandwiches, such as a veggie burger, pot-roast sandwich and pulled-pork sandwich.

Fries are represented in a couple of varieties: Parmesan fries with truffle mayonnaise, chipotle ketchup and a garlic parmesan dipping sauce, as well as Disco fries — a poutine topped with white cheddar, slow cooked pot roast and gravy. Prices range from \$3.50 to about \$10.

Entrees include Creekstone Farms Angus beef meatloaf with mashed potatoes, onion straws and a red wine mushroom sauce; barbecued baby back ribs; seared Georges Bank scallops with lemon-asparagus risotto; and jumbo panko-breaded shrimp. Prices range from \$13.95 to \$20.95.

The sandwich and “hand-held” food lineup includes fish tacos with a honey-cumin dressing; a grilled salmon BLT; and a classic French dip. Prices range from \$9.95 to \$13.95.

Houlihan’s has a full bar, and popular items include \$10 wine flights with a choice of three wines, as well as the mini-martini flight with a choice of three flavored martinis for \$8.50. The restaurant also has what it calls “shareable beer” — artisan beers large enough to share. Varieties include a Rockmill Brewery Saison and Hoppin’ Frog Brewery’s Hoppin’ to Heaven IPA, both from Ohio, and Estrella Damm Inedit from Spain.

The physical space is about “progressive decor, design-forward finishes and architectural elements that showcase the direction we’re moving in, creating an upscale casual place,” Roberts said. Features include a fireplace separating the bar and dining room; works by local artists; and a custom-made, stainless-steel fireplace on the patio, which is littered with casual lounge chairs. Red glass tiles run along the bar face and around the kitchen. The new Houlihan’s is 5,600 square feet in size and seats 200 inside and 70 on the patio.

Past Houlihan’s were free-standing. The new vision is to locate restaurants at the end of a retail development, mixed-use development or entertainment district, the company said.

Houlihan’s used to have two restaurants in Columbus, at the Continent, on the Far North Side; and at 3580 W. Dublin-Granville Rd., on the Northwest Side. They closed in 2001 and 2007, respectively. The parent company, Houlihans Restaurants Inc., also owns J. Gilbert’s Wood-Fired Steaks and Seafood in Worthington. Overall, the company operates about 100 restaurants, most in the Midwest and along the East Coast. Houlihan’s parent company has been owned by the private equity firm Goldner Hawn Johnson Morrison since 2006.

Houlihan’s is open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 11 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday.

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/business/2013/03/26/houlihans-2-0.html>