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**THE CAP TIMES**

LET'S GET TAKEOUT

## **Hop on pop! Dad jokes are fizzy fun at Liv's Drink Emporium in Sun Prairie**

by Victoria Davis, Special to the Cap Times Mar 28, 2021

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Angie and Brad Stroud sip soda beverages at their soda and coffee shop, Liv's Drink Emporium, located at 3140 Edmonton Drive #100 in Sun Prairie.

RUTHIE HAUGE



by Victoria Davis, Special to the Cap Times

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From cherry Coke concoctions to blue curaao and “tiger’s blood” syrup (watermelon, strawberry and coconut), Liv’s Drink Emporium in Sun Prairie can flavor a soda more than two dozen different ways.

Some ideas came through recipe research online. “Other mixes were just through trial and error,” said Brad Stroud, who owns the soda shop with his wife, Angie Stroud. Since Liv’s opened last December, it has benefitted from the Stroud family’s robust group of taste testers.

“One of the fortunate things of having five kids is we have plenty of people to experiment recipes with,” Brad said. “And we’re not the ones who end up with the gut rot.”

Liv's Drinks Emporium uses Torani syrups to mix their flavors in house. The drink names are all Brad originals.

"All the names of the drinks are originals," Angie said. "Brad is all about the dad puns, so that dictated a lot of what we named our drinks."

There's Choc of the Town made with Coke or Pepsi, chocolate and cherry. Peach Be With You is Sprite, blue curaçao and peach. Camp Touch This! evokes s'mores, made with root beer, toasted marshmallow and salted caramel. There's a Berry Mangilow, Don't Fruit the Messenger, You're One in a Melon and Tropic Like It's Hot.



Tropic Like It's Hot, made with lemonade, blue curaçao and peach flavors, is a popular soda drink at Liv's Drink Emporium in Sun Prairie.

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Brad's love of puns also influenced the shop's decor, computer graphic wall art that says "Let's get Fizzical" and "Is this real life, or is this just Fanta Sea?"

*[At A La Brasa, Mexican favorites fly out the door]*



Angie Stroud pumps syrup into a mixed soda beverage at Liv's Drink Emporium.

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### **Berry sweet**

Liv's stocks more than 25 mix options, and each soda starts with a base of Pepsi, Coke, Sprite, Mountain Dew, root beer or sparkling water ("spritzer"). Specialty sodas sized from 16 to 32 ounces cost \$2.15 to \$2.89. And of course, diners can add extra creams, fruit squeezes, purées and flavors.

A group of local kids the Strouds have nicknamed the "biker gang" have started coming by on sunny days, five or six of them rolling through the drive-thru on their bicycles.

“I overheard them say, ‘OK, you're going to go in now, and you need to get one with like five different flavors,’” said Angie. “I don't know if they're challenging each other or something? They come up with some interesting drinks.”

One was a mix of pineapple, pear, Coke, vanilla and watermelon. The kids ordered it several times, so the Strouds figured it had to be good. They made one for themselves, and —

“It was terrible,” Angie said. “It was so gross. But they’ve ordered it four or five times now.”

***[Indigenous chef Elena Terry plants seeds of a sustainable future]***



Liv's Drink Emporium opened in December 2020 at 3140 Edmonton Drive #100 in Sun Prairie.

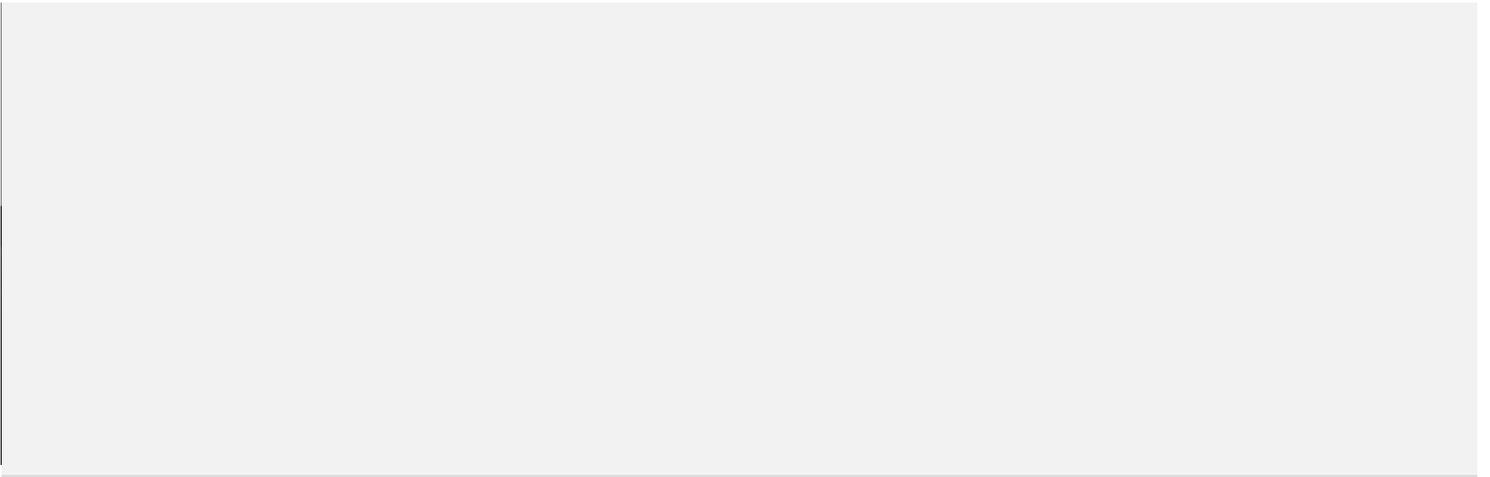
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### **Cake it easy**

Angie and Brad blended their families when they married four years ago. They now run Liv's Drink Emporium with the help of their 17-year-old son Garrik, as well as 27-year-old son Devyn and 15-year-old daughter Elora. Sometimes their youngest, 7-year-old Livia, lends a hand too. The store is named for her.

"It's been fun to see our kids want to be here," Angie said. "I'm kind of blown away by how involved they have been."

Once, Livia had to wake up at 4 a.m. to come bake with her dad. "There was no fight or anything," Brad recalled. "Once we got here, I got her all tied up with a hairnet and we started baking. She wields a rolling pin better than I do."



B-Rad's Pretzels at Liv's Drink Emporium are available in multiple flavors. Pictured, clockwise from upper left corner, are asiago, everything, salted chocolate and M&M pretzels.

RUTHIE HAUGE

Liv's counter displays an array of scones (\$2.99), muffins (\$2.49), giant Rice Krispies treats (\$2.29), and customer favorite "B-Rad's" soft pretzels (\$2.49). The latter have toppings like cinnamon and sugar, chocolate M&Ms, and asiago cheese (on different pretzels, of course).

*[As dining rooms reopen, restaurants rewrite the message to boost customer confidence]*

Liv's doesn't serve full meals. Angie said the goal was to make a fun space where families could come together, recreating shake-shack vibes of the 1960s. She has been a professional photographer for 10 years and is responsible for the photography and punny posters at Liv's.

"I came up with the idea while I was on a trip to visit a friend in Idaho," she said. "They have these tiny little pop shops out there, like the size of a food cart."

Brad, who has worked in restaurants around Madison for the past 30 years, was slightly skeptical of the idea at first. (**According to the Sun Prairie Star**, his past businesses include Good Spirits in Sun Prairie, Capitol Hill Grill in Madison, Rosati's Pizza in Brookfield and a Qdoba in Janesville.)

"In Wisconsin, we don't do soda as much as we do beer," Brad said. "But she came back and was so excited. One of the things that I appreciate about her is she's really a kid at heart. When Angie gets the opportunity to engage with kids in a family environment that way, it's something that she really enjoys. And that's the kind of thing these pop shops create."



At left, the Berry Mangilow is a Mountain Dew-based drink with mango puree and strawberry syrup. Center, Tropic Like It's Hot is made of lemonade, blue curaçao and peach flavors, and the Cafe Miel is made of espresso, honey, cinnamon and milk.

RUTHIE HAUGE

## **One pine day**

In addition to its soda creations, Liv's Drink Emporium offers lemonade, iced tea and coffee. One "biker gang" customer, 8-year-old Skylar Johnson, has also utilized her own creative skills on Liv's hot cocoa drinks.

"Skylar isn't a soda drinker," said Becky Borys, Skylar's mom. "But right before we visited Liv's, they had posted a picture of this fantastic-looking hot chocolate beverage with whipped cream and a cookie on top. Skylar immediately was like 'I want to try that!'"

Skylar has made a banana hot cocoa and a chilled version. She's become a regular, well-known customer, stopping in a few times a week to show Angie her dance splits and put in a drink order. When asked what she loved most, Skylar's response was fast.

"It's the cookie," she said. "Their drinks are good and their baked goods are good. It's all good."

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### Liv's Drink Emporium

3140 Edmonton Drive #100, Sun Prairie

(608) 478-1936

[livsdrinks.com](http://livsdrinks.com)

#### HOURS

Saturday-Sunday 7 a.m.- 5 p.m.

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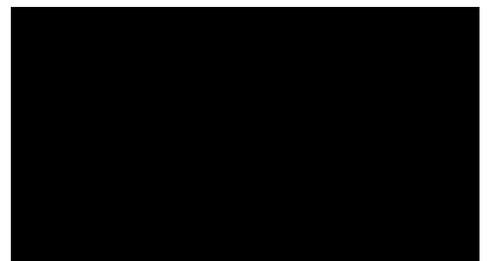
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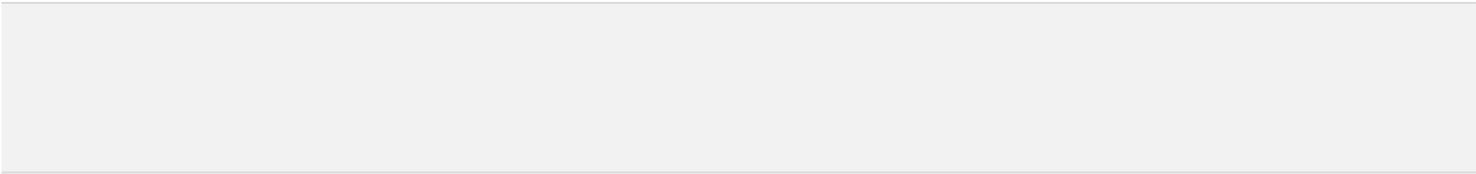




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