

# 'LET US OPEN THEIR MINDS'

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Austin Montgomery/Beloit Daily News Patrons of truk't street tacos, tequila and whiskey dine during lunch Tuesday afternoon in Beloit.

BELOIT - Bold, unique and worldly.



That's how staff of downtown Beloit's newest restaurant describe truk't street tacos, tequila and whiskey.

The taco bar has been open for just over two weeks, and house manager Jason Vogel said the response from the community has been "amazing."

"The city has come out to support us in full force," Vogel said. "We've been blown away by the amount of people that have come out to try us, and to let us open their minds to different things. Our staff has been amazing. People say it feels like we've been open for months or years. It goes to the dedication and hard work

our staff has put into it."

The restaurant represents a new direction for the once-troubled property at 443 E. Grand Avenue in Beloit, a building which has seen multiple failed establishments due to a number of issues.

"What we've heard from the community is that this space has been neglected by the community for a long time," Vogel said. "It's a beautiful space. The location is amazing."

Step inside truk't and you might confuse it for a 1920s-era speakeasy with its rustic decor and refined central bar.

The menu of appetizers, salads and tacos was crafted by Chicago-based chef Dudley Nieto, and the beverage menu offers over 100 types of whiskey and tequila.

"This is a drink list you won't see in very many places, especially around here," Vogel said.

You won't find your average street taco at truk't, but staff say their eclectic flavors are meant to challenge diners to try something new.

So far early favorites include the made-to-order guacamole with choice of spice pineapple and pepitas or mango habanero relish, stuffed jalapeños, house-made chips and salsa.

The most popular tacos include the Chicken Tinga, roasted chicken, lime, sour cream, fresco cheese, sliced radish and the Short Rib, slow roasted short rib ropa vieja with tamarind sauce, pickled red onions and cilantro.

"We're going to ask you to step outside of your comfort zone and give us a try," Vogel said. "Everything is made in-house. Everything is prepared the day-of and it's fresh."

Tucked away in the back of the taco bar sits the kitchen, bustling with wait and kitchen staff, engulfed in the smells of smokey, savory and citrus-based dishes. Next to the grill sits a tortilla press, where fresh-made tortillas are meant to serve as a "vessel," for a range of flavors.

"It's not your traditional taco," Vogel said. "We've all had excellent food from a street truck or street vendor and sometimes those flavors are a little outside of the box. That's what we are looking for."

Hours for truk't span Sunday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. For updates on the restaurant, find truk't street tacos, tequila & whiskey on Facebook or visit [trukttacos.com](http://trukttacos.com).