

# Get your BBQ kicks at Route 46



Route 46. (Red Huber, Orlando Sentinel / December 13, 2009)

Heather McPherson

FOOD

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**Route 46 Entertainment District** in Sanford is the culinary equivalent of a busy highway clover leaf. Head down one ramp and you will find yourself at an **upscale eatery** called **Monroe's**. Take the east turn and you'll end up at the front door of a home-style eatery called **The Smokehouse**. Veer off the main drag a little to the Northwest and you'll find **The Saloon**, a somewhat refined bar with **signature cocktails, seafood, ribs, flatbread and soups**. **The Garage Bar**, your fourth destination option, is connected to an outdoor dance floor and porch, where live entertainment is featured weekly.

With the exception of the more ambitious Monroe's, menus have common threads such as **quesadillas, sandwiches, appetizers** and the like. The complex is neat and coiffed in Disney opening-day style. The motif throughout is **retro roadway**, with old cars, antique gas pumps and vintage highway signs. In some ways it reminds me of a smaller scale variation of the original premise for **Church Street Station** in downtown **Orlando**. There is a little something for everyone in a variety of settings.

On my first visit, my destination was Monroe's. But a private party was being set up in the

restaurant and that was my bad for not calling ahead or checking the Web site. Employees were very friendly, allowing interlopers to scope out the inside without crashing what appeared to be a very nice holiday party. Indeed, the entire complex seems to be a flexible choice for groups celebrating any occasion. On a takeout menu, guests will find catering and delivery options as well.

We chose The Smokehouse, a laid back order-at-the-counter-and-take-your-seat kind of place. It had been a long day of holiday shopping and the **3-pound smoked meat sampler** (\$24.99) was enticing. It serves at least three, which we liked because it gave us leftovers, too. Served in a large pan, the order includes **beef, chicken, pulled pork, turkey, pork sausage, pork ribs, chicken wings and garlic bread**. We got to choose two sides and the sweet-tangy **coleslaw** and the rich, dark **baked beans** were a good match. The appetizer serving of **mild chicken wings** (\$7.99 for 10, \$12.99 for 20) was skillfully smoked and had a slightly sweet flavor note. However, the **fried popcorn shrimp** died on the plate. Tossing the delicate morsels of breaded shellfish simply weighed them down unmercifully in a greasy mess.

Route 46 serves **breakfast** from 7 a.m.-11 p.m., and is able to easily accommodate large groups passing through **Seminole County**. The only other morning fuel stops in sight were an old **Denny's** and a **Cracker Barrel**. With the outdoor dining options and well-conceived surroundings, I'd wager Route 46 gives both competitors a run for the money.

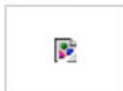
Crowds at Route 46 ebb and flow according to our servers, who could not have been more friendly and efficient. And it's a shame the complex is not hopping all of the time. There is something for every appetite, plenty of parking, convenient access to **Interstate 4** and lots of nearby shopping for Santa's holiday helpers.

## Heather McPherson



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### See for yourself

Route 46

**Where:** 4316 W. State Road 46, Sanford (east of Interstate 4 at Elder Road, next to B.J.'s Wholesale Club).

**When:** **The Smokehouse**, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday, 7 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday, 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday (weekend breakfast 7-11 a.m., happy hour 4-7 p.m. daily); **Monroe's**, 4-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 4-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 4-9 p.m. Sunday; **The Saloon**, 4-11 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 4 p.m.-midnight Friday and Saturday, 4-9 p.m. Sunday (happy hour 4-7 p.m. daily); **Garage Bar**, check Web site for updated operating hours.

**How much:** \$8-\$37.

**Live music:** Check Web site for entertainment schedule.

**Extras:** Private dining for large groups, outdoor dining, catering.

**Wheelchair access:** Easy breezy.

**Call:** 407-268-5207.

**Web:** [Route-46.com](http://Route-46.com) and on [MySpace](http://MySpace).