

## Agent backs Gateway with melt restaurant

What would soup be without grilled cheese?

Lanné and Dave Bennett have signed a lease at the South Campus Gateway development next to Ohio State University for Gooeyz, a fast casual melt sandwich business.

Having seen Chipotle and Baja Fresh duke it out for burrito supremacy and watching Five Guys Burgers and Fries battle for appetites with Columbus-based Graffiti Burger, the wife-and-husband team began brainstorming a quick-service eatery of their own. All roads led to grilled cheese.

"It's an American classic," Lanné Bennett said.

The restaurant is scheduled to open Aug. 2 in a 2,500-square-foot space next to the Gateway Theater in the development's alleyway.

Bennett knows Gateway well. Her day job is as a senior vice president of leasing for Dallas-based Cypress Equities, which handles leasing at the development.

Sandwiches will be \$6.99, with average checks around \$10, including drinks and sides. The menu will have five sandwiches, all thematically named, including the Mooey Gooley with beef and the Sooye Gooley with ham. Bennett declined to share sales projections.

The dining spot's mezzanine will have a bar and full liquor license, and the restaurant will host live music throughout the week to cater to the college crowd. They want patrons to hang out and chat and hope to be friendly to study groups.

"Lazy casual," Bennett called it.

The business also will try to court office workers by opening at 7 a.m. and offering coffee and breakfast sandwiches, as well as night owls with initial plans to stay open to 3 a.m.

"As long as it makes sense, we'll keep those hours," Bennett said.

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## Gooeyz

1554 North High St., Columbus, OH 43201 (614) 824-1731

Gooeyz is a locally owned grilled-cheese joint located at the South Campus Gateway. The spot claims its gourmet grilled cheeses are better than your mom's (but don't tell her). Owned by Ohio State alums, the restaurant has inexpensive food, live music, a full bar and stays open late. We tried the O'ahuie Gooeyz Hawaiianz and fresh-cut fries (\$7.98). With ham, grilled pineapple, mozzarella, and pizza sauce, this grilled cheese beats any we have ever tasted. Sorry Mom!

Date ran: October 2010

## Talk of the Town

Restaurants that Columbus critics and bloggers are talking about right now:



[Solay Bistro](#)

photo by [foodhussy](#)

1. [Gooeyz](#)
2. [Solay Bistro](#)
3. [Piada Italian Street Food](#)
4. [Loops](#)
5. [Jason's Deli](#)
6. [Knead](#)
7. [Lynnally's](#)
8. [Greek Corner](#)
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The Columbus Dispatch

ON RESTAURANTS

## Gooney gourmet

### Couple launches restaurant featuring specialty grilled cheese and other melts

Tuesday, August 31, 2010 02:50 AM

BY DENISE TROWBRIDGE

FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Grilled cheese. It's the humble sandwich beloved by vegetarians and toddlers. Thanks to Gooneyz, a new restaurant in the South Campus Gateway, it has gotten a serious gourmet makeover.

Dave and Lanne Bennett opened Gooneyz, a restaurant specializing in grilled cheese and melt sandwiches, at 1554 N. High St. on Aug. 10. Their official grand opening is today.

"Dave is an amazing cook, and he'd been playing around with grilled cheese," Lanne Bennett said. "We saw what restaurants were doing with gourmet hamburgers and burritos and thought, 'Why not do that with grilled cheese?'"

The idea sprang from a simple craving on a cold January morning.

As the story goes, Dave really wanted a grilled cheese, something super filling and tasty, something on thick bread and loaded with cheese. He realized there wasn't anywhere to get what he wanted, so Lanne handed him a skillet and told him to get to work. The resulting sandwich was so delicious, they say, they knew they were on to something.

Despite limited restaurant experience - Lanne, once a waitress and bartender, works in commercial real estate, and Dave is a general contractor - the two decided to turn their hot idea into a restaurant.

They hired a consultant to help them develop a menu, found a location and opened Gooneyz eight months later.

Gooneyz is open 7 a.m. to midnight Monday and Tuesday, 7 a.m. to 3 a.m. Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 a.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to midnight on Sunday.



FRED SQUILLANTE | DISPATCH

**Sisters Katie O'Shea, left, and Olivia Simon place orders with Gooneyz employee Karen Hill. The South Campus Gateway restaurant opened Aug. 10 but is holding its official grand opening today. The Gooneyz menu includes the Bayouie Gooneyz, left - chicken, pepper-jack cheese and Cajun sauce - and the Veggie Gooneyz - eggplant, sauteed zucchini, peppers, mushrooms and a house sauce. Hand-cut fries are on the side.**

"We really jumped into it wholeheartedly, and now we're just going along for the ride," Dave Bennett said. "Our plan is just to cruise along and get the kinks worked out."

The high failure rate of new restaurants and an economic downturn that has left the dining public pinching pennies don't have the Bennetts overly concerned.

"Fast casual is the one restaurant category that is doing well," Lanne Bennett said. And they're pretty high on the Gooneyz location near Ohio State.

"University towns haven't been hit like the rest of the country," she said. "And the university area will be a good demographic for us."

Gooneyz hopes to entice students and Short North residents with fare such as the Bayouie Gooneyz, a combination of chicken, pepper-jack cheese and house-made spicy Cajun sauce. It costs \$5.99 for a whole sandwich or \$3.89 for a half.

The O'ahuie Gooneyz, inspired by a Hawaiian-style pizza, is a sandwich of ham, mozzarella, grilled pineapple and pizza sauce for \$5.99.

Vegetarian fare includes the Veggie Gooneyz - with grilled eggplant; sauteed zucchini; red, green and yellow peppers; mushrooms; and a house-made sauce of artichoke, red peppers, sun-dried tomatoes and pesto - for \$6.99.

The Valuey Gooneyz, which is the sandwich that started it all, costs \$3.69.

Sides include seasoned hand-cut fries that take three days to prepare - just how this happens is a Gooneyz secret, the Bennetts say - for \$1.99 and fried pepper-jack cheese skewers with marinara sauce for \$3.99.

Gooneyz serves breakfast until 10:30 a.m. on weekdays and 3 p.m. on weekends. The restaurant offers three breakfast sandwiches, including the Soo Wee Gooneyz, with egg, cheese and sausage or bacon on Texas toast for \$3.69.

Gooneyz also has a full bar and live music Wednesday through Saturday.

While their menu might be a feast for the palate, the decor is a feast for the eyes. The former Happy Greek space was given a significant makeover. The Bennetts opened up the kitchen and painted the place in rich reds and oranges. Graffiti-style murals and a gigantic version of a cast-iron skillet made by local artists decorate the walls.



FRED SQUILLANTE | DISPATCH

**Sisters Katie O'Shea, left, and Olivia Simon place orders with Gooneyz employee Karen Hill. The South Campus Gateway restaurant opened Aug. 10 but is holding its official grand opening today.**



FRED SQUILLANTE | DISPATCH

**These Gooneyz employees came in on their time off for lunch - from left, Brandon Reed, Chandler West and John Markus.**



**The Gooneyz menu includes the Bayouie Gooneyz, left - chicken, pepper-jack cheese and Cajun sauce - and the Veggie Gooneyz - eggplant, sauteed zucchini, peppers, mushrooms and a house sauce. Hand-cut fries are on the side.**

## Cheap Eats: Grilled cheese sandwiches

Thursday, October 28, 2010 06:00 AM

By Heather Gross



There's something about the weather turning colder that makes me want to eat comfort food and listen to The Decemberists. While "The Crane Wife" is soothing enough to make me forget about my heating bill, I turn to grilled cheese when I need comfort without a side of woe.

Many bars, diners and other eateries serve the classic food. But not all grilled cheese is created equal, and the price isn't always easy to swallow. After an extensive search, I've found the best bang-for-your-buck grilled cheese.

### Goeyz

1554 N. High St., Campus

614-824-1731

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

A grilled cheese should be just that - it's got to have real cheese, not processed American "cheese product." (But if you're like Alive photo editor Will Shilling and prefer your sandwich "bad school-cafeteria style," your best bet is Jack's Diner, which gives you two slices of American for only \$2.65.)

You can get a real grilled cheese for a buck on Mondays at Bodega, where the delish mixture of cheddar, Swiss and provolone ordinarily costs \$5. But even if you can wait until Monday rolls around, you'll likely have to stand around until the 13 groups in line in front of you finish multiple rounds of drafts before you get seated.

For a cheap sandwich without the wait, four places in town sell a real grilled cheese for less than \$4. The Blue Danube and High Beck Tavern each offer your choice of bread and cheese for \$3.50, and for the same price Cafe Lola grills mozzarella and cheddar on fresh Italian bread. But your best bet for a quintessential, better-than-your-mom's sandwich is from the specialists at Goeyz.

The Valuey Goeyz (\$3.70) has an ample amount of mild cheddar melted on soft white bread that's cut in half. The crust is slightly crispy yet not so hard that you feel the need to nibble around it. It's the smoky flavor and butter-induced moistness that push this sandwich ahead of the competition.

When you're finished, you'll need several napkins to get the grease off your fingers, and you'll be happy that Goeyz lives up to its name.

# alive!

## Restaurant review: Gooeyz

Thursday, August 26, 2010 06:00 AM

By G.A. Benton



Click image for slideshow

It's so simple and viscerally pleasing that most Americans begin loving it when they're very young children.

Its uncomplicated charms continue to delight through the steady parade of school years. It's one of the first things kids learn how to cook. Recalling its ability to comfort, flustered adults will reach for it when in need of food that soothes. It's the grilled cheese sandwich, and a new, locally owned grilled-cheese specialist called, uh, Gooeyz is hoping to lure in fans.

Taking over the former Happy Greek spot in the South Campus Gateway mall, Gooeyz seems well thought through and cleverly equipped to please its built-in audience of OSU students.

### Gooeyz

1554 N. High St., Campus

614-824-1731

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

Advertising itself as "gourmet grilled cheese" that's "better than your mama's," Gooeyz seeks to distinguish its products from the familiar homemade jobbies by offering a slew of melted cheese sandwiches you can accessorize with everything from sliced lamb to pineapple rings.

Understanding its modern collegiate crowd, Gooeyz also provides a full bar with tap beers, bands on the weekends and a bright space decorated with an ironic sense of humor. To that end, there's an amusingly oversized Claes Oldenburg-like iron skillet sculpture on the wall plus lots of color photos wherein a grilled cheese sandwich poses in front of famous Columbus landmarks in the same manner as the notorious "Flat Stanley."

Foodwise, Gooeyz makes its dozen or so sandwiches (\$3 to \$7, and some are breakfast-styles) on heavily buttered, inch-thick Texas Toast-like bread (I liked the nine-grain version best) and sells them at reduced prices for a (still good-sized) halfer.

Otherwise there's sides like fresh-cut fries (\$2 for a "small" that was actually quite large and quite good, if oversalted) and soups such as a bisque and decent-enough Tomato Basil.

It seems like you'd have to try hard to ruin a grilled cheese sandwich, and Gooeyz didn't do that. In fact, using Cleveland-based Orlando bread and bold add-ons, it generally improved on the standard model. In other words, while retaining their primary identities as grilled cheese sandwiches, Gooeyz's versions added extra oomph and interest.

# alive!

New campus eatery is built on grilled cheese



A grilled cheese mouthful: The Veggie Gooneyz sandwich (Dan Trittschuh)

By Miriam Bowers Abbott

Published: Wednesday, August 25, 2010 6:59 PM EDT

Everybody likes grilled cheese. Everyone. It might require a sophisticated grownup palate to appreciate arugula and roasted fennel, but grilled cheese sandwiches are the go-to item on kiddie menus. They're primal.

That being so, it's amazing that there aren't more grilled cheese-centric restaurants. Columbus is home to lots of big hamburger chains and multiple hot dog joints, but there's just one grilled cheese place: Gooneyz.

Gooneyz made its debut in the South Campus Gateway earlier this month. With two floors of seating, it's a mutation between an eatery and a bar-slash-hangout. Diners place an order at the front counter, then follow a globby river of cheese (a mural on the floor) around the corner to retrieve fountain drinks and find a seat.

Gooneyz is open bright and early for breakfast at 7 a.m. Judging from the in-house banter during a recent visit, some of the serving team had actually been there for the 3 a.m. closing the night before. Still, they seemed good-natured and competent at grilling cheese.

The breakfast menu is basic. Oui Gooneyz (\$3.69, and easily the owner of the best title on the menu) is the restaurant's version of French toast. It consists of two thick slices of lightly egged white bread with sweetened cream cheese in the middle and fresh-cut strawberries.

For the Bob Evans Bucket crowd, the Soo Wee Gooneyz (\$3.69) also features the thick cut white bread, this time with a divine mess of egg and cheese and strips of crispy bacon. The sausage version is also good.

Butter, eggs, syrup, cured meat, thick white bread and cheese: What's not to like?

The hash browns (\$1.49) are the average sort. But even average hash browns are pretty darn good.

Things get a little more gourmet at lunch.

Baba Gooneyz (\$5.99) has lamb, cheddar feta and tzazaki sauce. It's OK, but it doesn't deliver the primal happiness of something more traditional like the Mooney Gooneyz (\$6.99). With corned beef and cheese, the classic combo hits the right notes inside its slices of grilled white bread.

That's not to imply that grilled cheese sandwiches require conventional fillings. The Veggie Gooneyz (\$6.99) is a very pleasant combo with peppers, zucchini, artichokes and some sort of tomato pesto. On this one, the pepper-jack cheese takes a back seat.

To round out the meal, there are a handful of sides. They include seasoned fries (\$1.79), which are worth investigation.

Gooneyz is a good thing, especially for the campus crowd. It's got a good vibe and an affordable, approachable menu.

Here's to many more local restaurants that specialize in grilled dairy products. After all, Columbus is a cow town.

## Restaurant Reviews: For cheese fanatics, Gooneyz is greatness

By [Thomas Bradley](#)

[bradley.321@osu.edu](mailto:bradley.321@osu.edu)

Published: Thursday, January 20, 2011

Cheese. Bread. Butter. Sizzle.

And you have grilled cheese.

Enjoyed by people of all ages, this American tradition is simple to make, and is a staple across the country.

Gooneyz takes grilled cheese to a whole new level. Located in the South Campus Gateway, Gooneyz offers a wide variety of "gourmet" grilled cheese at reasonable prices (\$3-\$7). Let's just say this is not your mom's grilled cheese sandwich.

Gooneyz opened in August last year. This restaurant is a great option for Ohio State students looking for a delicious twist on the American classic.

The atmosphere of the dining room is very relaxing. The main dining area seats about 35-40 patrons. The kitchen is out in the open as a part of the main dining room and gives customers a chance to witness the magic of the grill.

The Food

Gooneyz offers several, cleverly named grilled cheese sandwiches. All of Gooneyz' sandwiches are grilled on thick, Texas-toast style bread, generously buttered, and grilled to perfection.

At the suggestion of the cashier, I tried the Bayouie Gooneyz, the restaurant's most popular specialty sandwich.

The Bayouie Gooneyz is a Cajun-style, grilled cheese sandwich with chicken. The bread is layered with melted pepper jack cheese and coated with the restaurant's specialty Cajun sauce. A generous portion of grilled chicken pieces is piled on top of lettuce, tomato and onion.

To say the least, it was the best grilled cheese sandwich. Ever.

The Bayouie Gooneyz is one of 10 specialty sandwiches. Other specialty sandwiches include the Mooney Gooneyz (Roast Beef), the Baba Gooneyz (Gyro) and the Gobble Gooneyz (Turkey).

Another sandwich that I tried was the most popular sandwich on the menu, the Valuey Gooneyz. This is the original. The classic. The bread and butter (and cheese) of the grilled cheese industry.

Aptly named, this sandwich is a great value, in relation to the others offered. For about \$3, the Valuey Gooneyz is as basic as it gets.

One word to describe it: Gooney.

There was so much cheese on this sandwich, it was almost overwhelming. This is a sandwich for cheese fanatics.

The Hideout

In an attempt to cater to OSU students, the second floor of the restaurant is a full service bar. With seating for about 40 upstairs, the relaxing mood of the downstairs dining room continues.

The bar features several beers on draft including Natural Light, Bud Light, Stella Artois, 312 Ale and Kentucky Bourbon Barrel Ale.

The upstairs stage has live music on the weekends and Karaoke on Tuesdays.

Gooneyz is a great destination for food at all hours of the night. It is open until midnight Monday through Wednesday, 10 p.m. Sunday, and 3 a.m. Thursday through Saturday.

I will be recommending this to my friends, people I work with, classmates, professors and anyone else I can talk to.

Gooneyz provided a \$5 discount to The Lantern's reporter for this review.