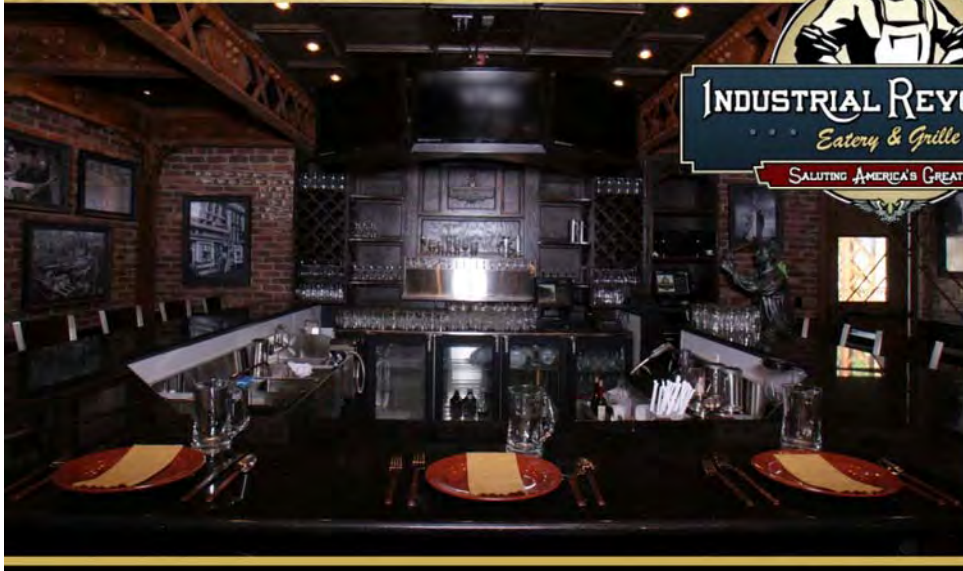


# THE INDUSTRIALIST

One Indiana eatery offers a new way to experience an old revolution.



ly as an independent business," Leeson says, adding that they are ready to launch a new menu and are currently looking into opening a second location. Ideally, he says, the establishment will expand nationally.

"The goal was to build the most bold and exciting casual-theme restaurant ever," Leeson says. "I believe that has been accomplished. It has the characteristics to motivate and inspire people, through an emotional connection as well as the education they receive with each visit."

Reflecting Synergy Steel Structures goal of establishing a new architectural trend—emphasizing steel as part of a structure, rather than hiding it—Leeson created a quite a vision with the construction of his eatery. It is essentially a building frozen in the booming era of 19th-century steelwork, with a row of working men immortalized in sculpture along the roof, frozen in conversation with lunchboxes in hand and legs dangling over the edifice. The entire establishment is a tribute to these men from our past, reminding patrons of their hard-work, dedication and contribution to developing our great nation.

Leeson himself is a true representation of modern-day American ingenuity. Since starting his career with only a high school diploma, he says he's always been an entrepreneur. "My dad gave me the initial opportunity to get into the steel business. I took the opportunity and just ran with it." Before the age of 40, Leeson has created not one but several visionary business enterprises. ■

Leave it to a modern-day steel magnate to take us back down memory lane, to a time when metallurgy, textiles and steam power forever changed the way we work, live and share ideas.

Entrepreneur Mike Leeson has a day job as the owner of Synergy Steel Structures. But when steel prices soared and construction slowed because of a stalled economy, he took on a new venture. Leeson opened a restaurant dedicated to honoring American ingenuity and spirit. Located in Valparaiso, Ind., the Industrial Revolution Eatery & Grille memorializes a great period of America in design, theme, and hearty helpings of mouth-watering food.

Leeson opened the restaurant in 2010 with one goal in mind. "I wanted to create a patriotic restaurant that would touch people's hearts visually, giving them an experience they don't typically get. We serve hand-crafted foods, not like the chains," Leeson

says. "We've brought back a lot of vintage dishes with a twist and added some brand new things, too."

The portion sizes aren't for the faint of heart, but perhaps an industrious steel worker would've easily polished off a plate-sized bacon cheeseburger or a generous helping of Mom's Double Shift Pot Roast, which according to Leeson is one of their most famous dishes. "It's based on a recipe borrowed from my mother. It's amazing! There's really nothing like it. We ended up creating a bunch of dishes around that pot roast. We put it on pizza and in pasta; it's one of our signature dishes." For a true slice of Americana, he suggests finishing with some Red, White and Blue Cheesecake.

Leeson says the Industrial Revolution Eatery & Grille was well-received from the start and has built a steady clientele. "We've only been open a year, and it has been challenging trying to work out the kinks, especial-

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