

All hail the royalty of the hot dog world



DINING WITH
DUFFY

King David Dogs

Address: 15 N. Pennsylvania St.,
Indianapolis

Phone: 632-3647

Hours: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to
Friday

Credit cards: Major cards accepted

Entrée price range: \$4 to \$5

I can't think of a better way to welcome in 2007 than by celebrating the return of the King David hot dog. It is an ultra plump quarter-pound, all-beef, Kosher-style hot dog that was a signature item for many decades of the Hene Meat Co.

As founded by brothers Paul and William Hene, the company enjoyed a lengthy run from the 1940s into the early 1990s, supplying meats to area groceries and butcher shops, with the King David brand hot dogs its most visible retail product.

A grandson of the founding fathers, Brent Joseph, took custody of the King David hot dog recipe, with his wife, Hannah, and business partner, Matt Hursh. In mid-November, they unveiled King David Dogs, a no-frills hot dog emporium off the

northeast corner of Washington and Pennsylvania streets in downtown Indianapolis, a block north of Conseco Fieldhouse.

They have enlisted the venerable Milwaukee sausage company, Usinger's, to manufacture the sausages to the Hene family recipe specs.

The modest 24-seat restaurant, with a mix of tables and counter seats, is dominated by the large flat iron grill and a massive menu board featuring the 10 regional hot dog styles.

Customers are given the option of having their dogs grilled or steamed, with 27 topping choices, including baked beans, white chicken chili, bacon and cole slaw.

Among the showcased stylings are the traditional chili dogs; the barbecue sauce slathered BBQ

dog; the Reuben dog with applicable Swiss cheese, sauerkraut and 1000 Island dressing additives; the Torpedo dog on French bread, and even the State Fair corn dog, duly impaled on stick.

I ordered two regional hot dog benchmarks, the Chicago dog and New York dog.

The Chicago dog (\$4.79) has particularly exacting standards that brook no derivation or substitution, to wit: Kosher-style hot dog in steamed poppy seed bun, topped with chopped onions, tomato wedges, dill pickle spear, yellow mustard (lose the ketchup), green relish, a dash of celery salt and hot sport peppers (the only certified optional ingredient).

The team of Joseph and Hursh obviously did their research on proper Chicago dog architecture, with all of ele-

ments in place in both appearance and flavor, producing a hot dog that brought a flood of distant childhood memories for this native of the Windy City.

The New York dog (\$4.79) lays on toppings of sauerkraut, spicy brown mustard and a light, slightly sweet onion sauce, infiltrated with finely chopped onions.

The sauce proved a pleasant flavor contrast to the naturally bolder sentiments of the kraut and mustard, making for a pleasing if somewhat messier hot dog dining experience, with the bun winding up absorbing the sauce.

The soft, steamed poppy seed buns are a definite asset, as produced by the Chicago-based Gonnella bread company. The star attraction King David hot dogs exhibit a rich red color and

firm texture, with a distinctive, garlic-infused Kosher-style flavor.

King David Dogs also lays on a smoked chicken hot dog, chili, chicken fingers, commendable French fries and tater tots, Zapp's potato chips from Louisiana and half-pound cookies from Carol's Cookies out of Chicago.

Yes, it's good to have King David back in town, with the hope it can spread its royal charms throughout Central Indiana. Good Kosher-style dogs, with all the regional trimmings, should play a more prominent role in the central Indiana fast-food universe.

Restaurant critic Reid Duffy writes a weekly review for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.