



The bar at the new
Snack Boys Snack
Bar in Walker's Point

**Snack Boys
Snack Bar**

814 S. Second St.,
[facebook.com/
snackboysmke/](https://www.facebook.com/snackboysmke/)

HOURS:
Wed-Sun from
4:21 p.m.

PRICES:
\$3-\$10.

SERVICE:
Chill.

RESERVATIONS:
Gosh, no.

It was probably inevitable that restaurant owners would see “small plates” for the two-bite finger foods that they are and seek to capitalize on them (i.e., serving less food for more money). In their favor, tapas let the diner try more things, often without breaking the bank. On the flip side, small plates can leave hungry diners unsatisfied. But if you allow your Lilliputian tag to fly – as the Snack Boys are doing in Walker's Point – you may start racking up followers who, like you, think that dining doesn't need to be taken so seriously.

One of the three Boys is Mitchell Ciohon, known for elevated takes on tacos from a truck parked on the patio of Boone & Crockett (due to move later this year from Bay View to a bigger space in the Harbor District). Ciohon says he and partner John Linkus were “spitballing” ideas for the snacks concept (completing the trio is Shay Linkus, the chef at Bay View's Vanguard

sausage bar) with no sense of urgency until the lease on the AP Bar & Kitchen space turned over. They then rolled up their naked Burt Reynolds poster and moved in.

Galvanized by their shared love of “high-brow” snacks, stiff drinks and thrift shop decor, they created a quasi homage to the 1980s with bright-pink neon, Patrick Nagel posters and a tropical touch (umbrella cocktails, potted palms). The fruity drinks – one is named “Sybaris... the Drink” after the legendary motel with pool “suites” – flow freely, the decibel level is loud and servers ferry plates out of the kitchen to diners, millennial to baby boomer.

Chefs Ciohon and Linkus both have fine dining backgrounds and chose to go the road of giving higher-brow ingredients a lower-brow spin. Raw oysters, shrimp cocktail, crab claws and uni (sea urchin) and chips make up the raw bar. Other

bites are grouped under “Meats” (even incorporating foie gras) and “Veggie.” Some menu items have big flavors and just make you wish there were more of them on the plate. For instance, the crispy, oniony fried tater tot pillows under a cloud of sour cream and nicely salty pink caviar (\$10) are something you could eat again and again. Same goes for the french fries crusted in a nutty, rich Wisconsin artisan cheese, Pleasant Ridge Reserve, and served with a thick, creamy aioli (\$5). Send Noodz – yes, that's a dish name – has gone through some changes since I ordered it as tasty pan-fried noodles with pungent kimchi and crispy fried Korean chicken wings (\$8). Now the noodles come in a seasoned miso broth with shiitakes and “spam” made by Madison's Underground Meats. One of the nights I was there, they had a wonderful little seared scallop slider with bibb lettuce and aioli on a toasted bun (\$10).

The Snack Boys tag some items with insidery names that in the case of Friend of the Deviled Egg (\$4), you don't know what you're getting. But I can tell you it's a delicious open-face egg salad sandwich topped with fried potato crisps, pickled red onion and chives! The vegetable-based

side of the menu is growing, partly due to demand, and one of the best early-spring dishes was the Radskis, a great warm/cool toss of three beautiful radish varieties, each cut differently and one of them cooked in brown butter, so you have a buttery, rich warmth softening the cool, sharp rawness of the other two (\$6). Honey vinaigrette, celery leaves, pickled mustard seeds and a whipped goat cheese-butter complete this beautiful salad. And finally, the bowl of flash fried tofu is simple and tasty (\$6).

Snack Boys reflects its owners' personal tastes more than their desire to follow a trend. And they execute the high-brow/low-brow dichotomy in a more refreshing way than I'd anticipated.

The really interesting part will be how the Snack Boys evolve, and if snacking proves to have staying power. ●

LISTEN TO “THIS BITES” ON
BBNINE RADIO MILWAUKEE
(FM 88.9) FRIDAYS AT 8 A.M.
WITH ANN CHRISTENSON AND
BBNINE'S TARIK MOODY.