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Attack of the Killer Crab Cakes

By **ROBERT STRAUSS**

The summer [Jersey Shore](#)

eating scene has become far too gussied up lately. Dinner entrees have gone far north of \$10, and pizza has toppings like caviar. There have been sightings of Kobe beef burgers in [Atlantic City](#), and even Asbury Park has chi-chi food where once a Nathan's dog was quite sufficient.

So it was especially satisfying to see Back Bay Seafood, the all-take-out-all-the-time joint, packed this summer, its sixth season of operation. The screened-in kitchen is wedged between two restaurants (the upscale Sea Salt and Macks Pizza, still pleasantly downscale) in a sort of strip-restaurant center along Third Avenue where Stone Harbor closes in on Avalon.

The top gimmick at Back Bay Seafood is the scheduled pickup for crab cakes. Though the take-out menu is extensive, with items like broiled lobster tails (two for \$21.99), a Mediterranean seafood salad (\$15.99 for a serving for four) and fried oysters (\$12.99), it is the ability to schedule a pickup for crab cakes that defines Back Bay Seafood.

Patrons can call the Back Bay hot line and set a time for the crab cakes to arrive at the screened-in window. Pickup is 5 to 9 p.m. in season and 5 to 8 p.m. in the quiet season. Back Bay has enlarged - dare we say supersized - its crab cakes to five ounces from the original four. They are half jumbo lump crab meat and half claw meat, so you get both chunks and pleasant strings in the cake. There is no filler, but there is a lot of buttery juice inside. Each cake is \$7, which is fair, given the cost of even mediocre crab cakes in a real restaurant.

Beware, though, of the regulars who crowd by the screen for Seven Mile Island gossip.

*Back Bay Seafood, 8305 Third Avenue, Stone Harbor (609) 368-2022.*

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