

Buddy's opens with a charity bash

By Craig Picheura
staff writer

It's not Buddy's Pizza — just Buddy's — on the General Tire sign on the Chrysler Freeway flashing the message "Capuchin Benefit — Buddy's — Mar. 29."

No further explanation is necessary for most Detroit area pizza eaters. They know the square, Sicilian-style pizza served at Buddy's has been voted best in its contests sponsored by the Detroit News, Detroit Free Press, WJBK-TV and the Automobile Club of Michigan. And one day a year the restaurant proceeds are donated to the soup kitchen run by Capuchin monks.

The funky flagship of Buddy's empire is located on the corner of Conant and McNichols on Detroit's east side. But a fourth location opened earlier this month in Farmington Hills on Northwestern Highway, north of Middlebelt Road.

Don't expect to sit on folding chairs and picnic tables, though, at this Buddy's. With the move to the affluent west side suburbs, they've opted for etched glass, antique lamps and a wooden bar. It's got the same food at the same price but the urban funk — called "Bohemian mystique" by the owners — has been left behind.

Before the name went up on the building, a lot of thought went into the restaurant, say the owners for the past 13 years Bill and Shirley Jacobs and son, Bob Jacobs, all of West Bloomfield.

"A lot of people we know wouldn't go south of Eight Mile," says Bob Jacobs. "They just wouldn't come to the Detroit Buddy's because it's in Detroit."

TO APPEAL to an older, more conservative and more affluent clientele, certain concessions were made, says

Jacobs, hopefully without tampering with a winning formula.

So, instead of pushing pitchers of Stroh's beer, waitresses at the Farmington Hills location hype exotic drinks such as the "Screaming Orgasm" and the "Banana Breeze."

In addition to the antipasto salad, they're also offering a meatless Greek salad.

But there are no desserts offered because people tend to dawdle over desserts.

"We depend on volume because our prices are so cheap," says the elder Jacobs.

A large, eight-piece Buddy's pizza costs \$2.30 and includes cheese, pepperoni, mushrooms, ham, green pepper and onion. The other three Buddy's locations accept a \$2 off coupon that runs in the sports section of the two Detroit newspapers but the coupon isn't accepted at the Farmington Hills location.

The owners explain that high overhead and capacity crowds prevent them from accepting the coupon in their location but aren't anxious to elaborate about the "negative aspect" of their merchandising plans.

IT SEEMS that coupons are a touchy subject to this pair who are working hard to compete in Detroit's pizza wars against competitors such as Little Caesar's running two-for-one pizza offers. It's a jungle out there, for sure.

Other restaurants have tried to steal Buddy's crown by claiming they hired the original chefs away from Buddy's. Restaurants such as Lou's in Hazel Park and Shield's in Detroit and four suburban locations have made claims that theirs is the true recipe.

Takes a lot of crust, say the Jacobs, who scoff at such claims but figure imitation is the most sincere form of flattery.

"You go to restaurants who supposedly have our cooks and our recipe and they screw it up," says Bill Jacobs. "The biggest difference is the quality of our ingredients. The second difference is our people care more. We might buy mushrooms that cost \$35 a can while they buy theirs for \$25 a can."

Quality control is assured, they say, by the likes of the "old crew" — people like Concetta Picciano who has worked more than 30 years at Buddy's original location as a keeper of the flame.

The Jacobs defy any customer to tell the difference between a pizza made in the Detroit location and the ones made at either Warren restaurant or Farmington Hills.

'You go to restaurants who supposedly have our cooks and our recipes and they screw it up.'

—Bill Jacobs
Buddy's pizzeria

"COME TO Buddy's and you'll get a consistently good product," says Bob Jacobs.

Part of what the owners call "Buddy's mystique" may be self-promotion. For example, they get very mysterious when asked what kind of cheese they use — only revealing that they use 20 tons of it weekly.

Still, many loyal customers are fanatics in their devotion to Buddy's. Consider Norton Bicoll, a former Detroit now working as a doctor in Amarillo, Texas, who calls the pizza "one of the few things we miss about

Detroit." Bicoll has 30 half-baked Buddy's pizzas air expressed to him each year for his birthday. And last year an engineer working in Cairo, Egypt, had five pizzas flown in much like when Col. Max Klinger on the TV series MASH had a Toledo hot dog parlor deliver coney dogs to Korea.

Where will Buddy's burgeoning pizza empire end? Bob Jacobs says he's eyeing other locations such as Ann Arbor and is considering opening an outlet in Denver. . . It came from Conant and it's headed for the cosmos.



Fixing up the staple of the Buddy's chain are (from left) Jeff Tatsak and Mike Kulesza.

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It's YOUR Money
by Charles H. Williams, C.P.A.
TWO PAYCHECKS—TWO POCKETS
The newlywed couple with two paychecks might as well start planning right away what to do with them. It may seem romantic to deposit every penny into a conjugal joint account, but financial planners warn that this is not wise. Though joint funds are convenient, especially for everyday household accounts, it's generally wise for each spouse to maintain an account on his or her own.
Why? Because the Internal Revenue Service still assumes that all joint accounts are part of the estate of the first spouse to die, spouse the surviving spouse can prove that he or she contributed. The separation of assets, plus careful record keeping, make that possible. Separate bank accounts are particularly important for each spouse's salary; then, there are paper records of money going in—and out.
If estate planning seems too remote to a newlywed young couple, there may be a possibility of a divorce some day. Separate accounts may help make such an unpleasant situation a little less difficult.
If both spouses are earning substantial income, a will should be written with tax considerations in mind. Rather than leave a large bequest to a spouse who has sufficient income of his or her own, the couple may choose a trust agreement that distributes income to spouse and other beneficiaries so as to minimize the tax burden.
While estate planning is an ongoing activity, initial decisions—and a will—call for the help of an attorney and accountant.

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