



Frederic Andrei stars as a young mailman whose passion is opera in the French thriller, "Diva."

## table talk

**FRISCO'S SALOON** has opened near to Stafford's in the Orchard Mall, West Bloomfield. The night spot offers dining, dancing, and drinking (thanks to a newly-acquired liquor license).

Owners Ted and Dennis Vaisis are highlighting California cuisine and live entertainment by the Billy Kalloo Trio featuring Lauri Moore.

**JAMES MCKENNA**, new chef at the Meeting Place in West Bloomfield, has created seafood and veal dishes as specialties of the day designed to join the regular menu.

Veal Caroline with crabmeat and cream is one of his creations, as is Trout Stuffed with Scallops and Tomato in Beurre Blanc Sauce.

McKenna studied at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., where he received the school's Gordon Bleu Award at graduation. He worked at LaPalazzo DiLaura restaurant at Arizona's Camelback resort and most recently at Atlanta's Jason's Restaurant.

**TWEENY'S CAFÉ** in Birmingham has revamped the dinner menu, to offer more light meals because customers have indicated a prefer-

ence for less filling fare.

The prix fixe dinner has gone from four courses at \$21.50 to appetizer and entree with vegetable or dinner salad at \$16.50. Light summer suppers are featured at \$10.25-\$12. Tweeny's plans to change the dinner menu at each season.

Those who want to go a la carte will find a new menu section offering classics such as rack of lamb, roasted to order and accompanied by three sauces, and also steaks ranging from pan-broiled sirloin, with anchovies and olives or with mustard sauce, to a 10-ounce fillet called tournade de beef a la verite.

**BRIAN MINARD**, the Northfield Hilton's assistant banquet manager for the last two years, is back as manager of the Wicker Works restaurant at the Troy Inn.

Born in Liverpool in 1938, Minard has a colorful background that includes working as an advertising writer, cab driver and author of a book. He created shows for the British Broadcasting Co., including a musical tribute to Johnny Mercer, and has written words to a song with music by Paul McCartney.

— Ethel Simmons

## what's at the movies

**ANNIE (PG)**. The successful Broadway musical is expanded and brought to the screen by director John Huston, with talented Aileen Quinn as Annie and Albert Finney and Carol Burnett.

**THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS (R)**. Burt Reynolds is Sheriff Ed Earl and Dolly Parton the whorehouse madam in musical comedy based on the Broadway hit.

**BLADE RUNNER (R)**. Harrison Ford is a detective hunting four defective human replicants who have become killers. Set in Los Angeles in the year 2020.

**DINER (R)**. Comedy drama set in 1959 about five friends and their difficult transition into manhood.

**E.T., THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL (PG)**. Steven Spielberg's best film yet, and probably the best film of the year, develops story of an alien being stranded on earth and befriended by a young boy.

**FORCED VENGEANCE (R)**. Action film set in Hong Kong with Chuck Norris, who gets involved in protecting honest casino owners from underworld takeover.

**NIGHT SHIFT (R)**. A mixture of broad humor and human comedy centering on friendship of two average New Yorkers who come up with a

one-in-a-million scheme to strike it rich. Stars Henry Winkler, Michael Keaton and Shelly Long. Directed by Ron Howard.

**AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN (R)**. Richard Gere and Debra Winger in gritty love story about a loner trying to rise above his seamy past and become a naval aviation officer.

### MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences admitted.
- PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R Restricted. Adults must accompany persons under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.

## the movies

**Louise Snider**

# French film 'Diva' appeals to senses with bright results

Considering how our senses are under constant assault in our overly communicative environment, it comes as a pleasant surprise to find a movie that actually makes an effort to appeal to them, rather than numb them.

"Diva" (R) appeals, tickles and delights. The movie (in French with English subtitles) is filled with surprises. Sometimes the surprises are visual, sometimes verbal. And sometimes they are unexpected actions or developments.

The director, Jean-Jacques Beineix, loves to build up our expectations toward an event and then resolve the situation in a way we didn't expect.

"Diva" is stylish. It's high-tech chic. It's special without special effects. I think that Beineix must have had fun making this movie, because it is so much fun to watch.

**WHAT MAKES "DIVA,"** all the more remarkable is that it is the director's first effort. Until now, Beineix has been working as an assistant director for various French filmmakers. He obviously learned well from these experiences and transmitted his knowledge as well as his enthusiasm to this initial effort. It's a movie made by someone who likes movies.

The elements aren't different from those found in hundreds of other romantic thrillers, but what Beineix does with them makes all the difference.

Jules (Frederic Andrei) is an 18-year-old postal delivery boy who is an ardent and devoted fan of opera singer Cynthia Hawkins. (Hawkins is played by American soprano Wilhelmina Wiggin Fernandez, who has sung with the Michigan Opera Theatre in "La Boheme," "Don Giovanni" and "Porgy and Bess.") Hawkins is a purist who has never made a recording.

At one of her concerts, Jules sneaks in a recorder and captures her performance on tape. Her song is from Act I of "La Wally" by Calzani. The music is a brilliant choice for this film. It is not familiar and overworked, but it is a beautiful aria that become familiar and haunting as it is repeated throughout the movie.

Unwittingly, Jules also becomes the possessor of another recording. A prostitute has made a cassette recording in which she identifies a prominent individual as the top person behind a white slavery racket. As she runs from goons who are chasing her, she drops the cassette into Jules' mailbox.

**BEFORE FILM'S END,** the police are hunting for Jules, the goons are after him and two mysterious Taiwanese who want to steal the concert tape and make pirated recordings are trailing him.

Meanwhile, he has charmed his way into the opera singer's life, and he has become friends with two amazing characters, not encountered in films before.

Alba (14-year-old Thuy An Luu) is a young Vietnamese girl living with Gorodish (Richard Bohringer), an artist-philosopher, with the smarts of an undercover agent and the coolness of a zen master.

Alba is a brightly colored popscicle, all glitz and plastic and cellophane. She is completely unself-conscious and unexpectedly wise.

Frederic Andrei also wins us over with his portrayal of Jules, the street-wise young man who still has the youthful capacity to idolize.

**SUSPENSE, LAUGHS,** romance and novelty, "Diva" has them all: A chase scene through a Paris subway that leaves you panting, snis that make you do a double-take, singing that raises goosebumps on you, images so beautiful you want to frame them, witty references (alluding to everything from surrealist painting to a Marilyn Monroe movie) that keep you guessing, and nasty villains you enjoy hating.

That's "Diva," the best French film in a decade.

"Diva" will be shown at 7 and 9:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday and 4 and 7 p.m. Sunday at Detroit Film Theatre at the Detroit Institute of Arts.



"Diva" pairs Thuy An Luu and Richard Bohringer as a mytacious couple who live together.

DIING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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