

table talk

A NEW CHEF and a new menu at the Meeting Place in Orchard Lake have brought — surprisingly — lower prices.

Regular patrons and would-be customers who have thought that the restaurant tended toward high-priced, though tasteful meals, have

been generally pleased with the menu changes. Rick Harrison, general manager of Bruce Cameron's restaurants, said the Meeting Place has kept 80 percent of the original menu and still has the same kitchen staff but has been able to cut prices because Chef James McKenna buys better and watches costs.

"We lowered menu prices dramatically by buying better. And we've put a few things on the menu that didn't cost as much up front," Harrison said.

He said people used to come to the Meeting Place for fish, red meat and ethnic food — and still do — but that the restaurant has brought in alternatives.

"We came up with a price-fixed menu, for the first time at any of our restaurants," he said.

A FIXED-PRICE dinner, at \$9.95, changes every week. "The chef is smart, and we make money on it," Harrison said.

First offered Sundays-Tuesdays, the fixed-price meal has been ex-

tended to Wednesdays-Thursdays. Not a skimpy repast, it includes appetizer, soup or salad, choice of entrée and a selection from the dessert tray.

A typical menu prepared by Chef McKenna for an upcoming fixed-price dinner includes, appetizers of seafood terrine, pasta Alfredo, or baked mushroom caps with Gruyere cheese and entrees of roast pork loin with pear sauce, monkfish sauté with white wine sauce, chicken breast sauté with mushroom and fennel, or coquille St. Jacques.

Another interesting menu includes entrees of roast pork chops with green peppermint sauce, stuffed veal breast with sauce Marsala, fillet of sole bonne femme, or roast Cornish hen with wild rice and chestnuts.

"You have to know what's good, what's in season, what your public wants to eat. I'm more concerned with the quality and the freshness," Chef McKenna said, describing his approach to the menu offerings.

McKenna uses herbs with everything. To obtain fresh herbs, he said, "We buy plants from nurseries and clip them off." In the summertime, plants are kept out back, behind the restaurant.

The Meeting Place does at least three times as much business on the nights the fixed-price menu runs, especially on Sundays.

THE KINGSLEY Inn on Woodward Avenue in Bloomfield Hills will be serving dinner New Year's Eve, with a choice of 15 entrees from Chef Dennis Lindinger's special menu.

Ronny Phillips will entertain at the piano bar, as usual. A small combo will play for dancing in the Athenian Hunt & Grill.

A New Year's Eve room rate of \$19.93 per person based on double occupancy will include a half-bottle of champagne, continental breakfast with fresh-squeezed orange juice, and late check-out.

For dining reservations, call 642-0100; for hotel reservations, 644-1400.

KOGY'S on Big Beaver Road at I-75 in Troy is offering a holiday menu with a choice of 16-oz. prime rib, boneless duck, veal picante, pickered or 10-oz. fillet, plus bread basket, soup, chef's salad, baked potato and cheesecake.

Party favors and a half-bottle of champagne per couple are included in the celebration for \$23.95 per person. The Charles Rowland Quartet will play for dancing.

Reservations may be made by calling 562-1252.

THIRD Annual New Year's Eve party, highlighted by two chamber music concerts — one in '82, one in '83 — will be held at the Browne Bookstore in West Bloomfield.

Members of the Detroit Symphony will play in the musical programs at the evening sponsored by Renaissance Concerts and Ithaca. Proceeds will benefit Renaissance Concerts.

Champagne, wine, food and games are included for \$20 per person. For further information, call 62-MUSIC.

THE STEAK and Ale will have extended dinner hours New Year's Eve, providing hats and noisemakers along with the meal.

Among entrees available are, new for '83, London broil, filet mignon and seafood platter. Also offered will be specialties such as Hawaiian chicken, Kensington club, prime rib, broiled shrimp pilaf and lobster.

Locations for Steak and Ale include restaurants at 24666 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, and 27500 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. Others are in Madison Heights and Plymouth.

THE WESTIN Hotel in Detroit's Renaissance Center is featuring a "night of magic," with dining, dancing and champagne in the Summit and La Fontaine restaurants. For more information, phone 568-8257.

— Ethel Simmons

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27590 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills 476-8440
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21666 Northwestern Highway, Southfield 353-7448
(South of 10 mile Road)

40347 Ann Arbor Road, Plymouth 453-8080
(At I-275)

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\$175 per couple

Plan 2 (Grand Ballroom): Same as above without overnight
accommodations and brunch buffet

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Plan 3 (Wicker Works/Hurley's): Choice of complete Prime Rib or
Shrimp Tempura dinner • Bottle of wine • All tips and taxes • Everything
included in Plan 4

\$103 per couple

Plan 4 (Hurley's): All cocktails • Live entertainment and dancing
Champagne toast • Hats and favors • After-midnight snack • All tips
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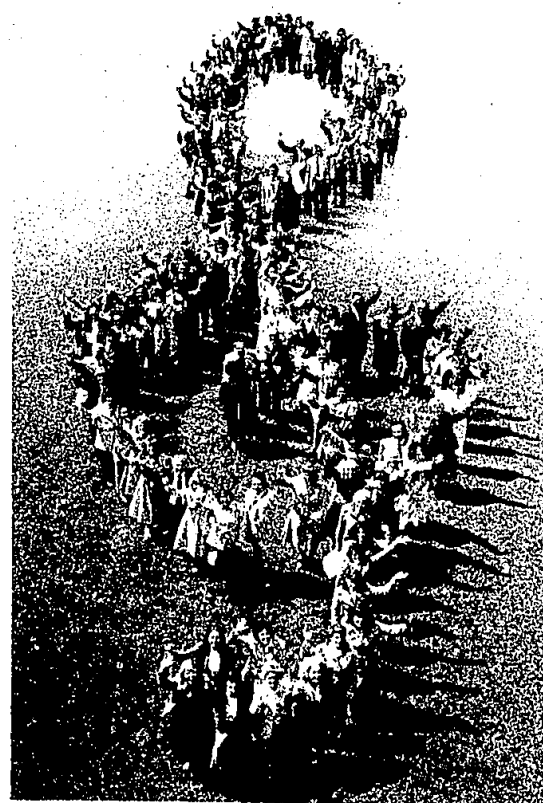
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For more information on any of the above plans, call 879-2100. Space
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