

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



Thursday, April 17, 1986 O&E

(Wb,T,Ro-8D)(O)SC

Seafoods

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

More and more, restaurants devoted especially to seafood are finding eager customers in Oakland County.

Opened in 1985 were Norm's Oyster Bar & Grill of Southfield and Scallop's of Rochester. One of the mainstays of the seafood scene, with a 10-year history, is Charley's Crab in Troy, which is the leading light of the many local restaurants in Chuck Muer's operation. Also since last year for fish lovers is Benisushi, Japanese restaurant and sushi bar in Troy.

All offer interesting dining experiences, with deliciously prepared dishes. Because of the variety each features, you'll find them places to visit again and again, while ordering different specialties each time.

NORM'S OYSTER BAR, housed in the site of the old Vineyard restaurant, has the kind of food and service one has come to expect at other eateries owned by Norm and Page (Norman's Elton Street Station in Birmingham and Nitty Norman's in Walled Lake). The food is simply prepared, generally quite pleasant and served in an inviting, casual atmosphere.

What makes Norm's Oyster Bar so special is its extensive menu.

On a recent afternoon, I settled into a booth in the main dining room, which is attractively decorated in blue, mauve and grey, with a pink-domed stucco ceiling. I faced the oyster bar, where you can be seated to order oysters, clams or shrimps.

These appetizers also can be ordered off the menu at your table, along with such other precludes to meat as steamed mussels or baked stuffed shellfish. I decided to go directly to the entree, for lunch, and had a choice of ordering from menu categories of stews and parousas, seafood, shrimp and saute, to mention the daily specials.

Six different kinds of fish were noted, with prices, on a menu card listing 24 different kinds of fish as "Today's Available Catch." The six available that day were Boston scrod, whitefish, rainbow trout, Mako shark, Mahi Mahi and sword-

fish. The card also detailed methods of preparation — chargrilled, poached or blackened (one, two or all three ways might be suggested).

I opted for the Mahi Mahi (at \$8.25). The tell-all menu card also gave some facts about a few of the fish including the Mahi Mahi. I'd never tried Mahi Mahi, which is popular in Hawaii. It's also known as Blue Dolphin but is not a member of the porpoise family.

Recommended chargrilled, the fish arrived in a good-sized portion, colorfully topped and spiced with paprika. The fish had an appealing flavor and was very tender. It was served with stir-fry vegetables, a nice accompaniment. The tartar sauce served with the fish was tangy. Cole slaw was cold and tangy.

An entire small loaf of plump bread with caraway seeds came with the meal and certainly was more than one or even two people could eat.

Entrees at lunch that day ranged in price from \$6.95 to \$9.50 for the fresh catches. The day's soup (a la carte) was clam chowder, and other daily specials included still another fish — orange roughy — at \$7.95. Desserts (not on the menu) include homemade ice cream. I tried vanilla ice cream with white chocolate chips (\$2.25). Delicious!

Norm's Oyster Bar & Grill, 2910 Franklin Road, Southfield. Phone 337-4442. Licensed.

BENISUSHI, restaurant and sushi bar at the Kyoto Japanese steak house in Troy, is a striking room of light wood and colorful accents. A focal point is the sushi bar where more than a dozen customers may sit and be served orders of raw fish prepared by the chef working out in the open.

On a recent noon hour, I arrived at the uncrowded bar and told the friendly chef, Hiro, I wanted to order sushi. He gave me the separate sushi menu, which lists more than 30 items. Each bit of raw fish (in some cases the fish is broiled, I learned) may be ordered individually and is priced separately, from \$1-\$2.25. Each is served over a mound of

closely packed rice.

Maki, with the fish layered in rice and seaweed, then rolled up like a tiny jelly roll and sliced, is priced from \$1.70 to \$9 for various kinds. Each order contains a number of slices.

Not being really familiar with all kinds of sushi — I'd only sampled it once before — I decided to order one of the combinations available. The small sushi combo, at \$8, was a serving large enough for two, so it's best to bring a friend when ordering this. I ate about half of what I ordered and got a "fishie" bag for the rest, to take home.

For first-time sushi-eaters, the combo is a good way to sample. The chef prepares all sushi orders personally, unwrapping a whole fish, wielding a knife to cut thin slices and then putting them atop the rice.

Faced with a plate of mostly raw fish, I was temporarily unnerfed. But eating it slowly, I found the taste not unpleasant, in fact, quite refreshing. The Tekka Maki, or tuna roll, was the first I tackled. The fish actually does not taste completely raw.

There also was salmon, tasting like the familiar lox, and halibut, which had flavor similar to cooked halibut. Shrimp, again, was familiar, and delightfully served, with its little fan tail.

Shrimp, and the octopus which came with bits of tentacles on the edge of its slice, are served broiled rather than raw. Tuna and yellow tail are the other two kinds of fish included on the combination plate, and both were good.

The entire service is artistically done and presented. The sushi is placed on a small, square wooden board with short legs. You unfold a red napkin and eat with chopsticks

(not as difficult to do as it first appeared).

Included with the sushi was a bowl of soup and also tea, in a decorative mug. These were brought by the waitress in kimono, who also took my order for a glass of plum wine. Afterward, I thought the briny taste of the sushi might have gone better with a glass of Japanese beer rather than the sweet wine.

To enhance the taste of the sushi, the seafood is served with a mound of green horseradish and thin slices of pinkish, pickled ginger. A touch of the horseradish is also added to some of the rice in individual sushi items.

Instead of a really full feeling afterward, it was more like a cool sensation in the pit of my stomach.

Benisushi Japanese Restaurant and Sushi Bar, 1985 W. Big Beaver Road, Troy. Phone 649-6240. Licensed.

SCALLOPS OF ROCHESTER, on Main Street in the heart of Rochester, serves scallops and a whole lot more. The restaurant doesn't open until 4 p.m., so lunch isn't an option, but I stopped in for an early dinner around 6 p.m. on a recent evening.

From the outside, the restaurant looks like a warehouse, or a barn, but when you enter, it's a delightful surprise. The dimly lit interior has a nautical decor and dark wood furnishings. I was seated at a small table with Windsor chairs. Button-tufted tan leather booths also are available.

More seating is provided on the other side of a barnwood room divider with panels of leaded glass, also featuring nautical scenes. Many prints of ships adorn the walls, carrying out the theme appropriate to a seafood restaurant.

The menu offers numerous choices. One category is devoted to Scallop's, Shrimp, Lobster and Crab (ranging from scallops primavera at \$8.95 to crab legs, shrimps, scallops and lobster tail at \$18.95); another features seafood favorites of Scallop's restaurant customers (such as Icelandic cod at \$8.95 and chargrilled sword fish with dill butter at \$12.95).

There's a wide selection of seafood appetizers, including fresh water smelt, steamed shrimp, fried clams, oysters on the half shell, baked oysters Rockefeller, steamed mussels and scallops seiche.

The separate list of the day's specials offered six different seafood catches of the day. Among these were blackened red snapper, fresh Boston scrod, Idaho rainbow trout, deep fried oysters, northern pike and scallop primavera, priced from \$8.50 to \$11.25.

Despite the fact that Cajun cooking is all the rage, I had never tried one of the blackened fish dishes that are cooked in an iron skillet. The amiable waiter, who seemed well-informed about all the menu offerings, described the way the blackened red snapper is prepared at Scallop's and said it wasn't too hot.

Not really happy with anything too spicy hot, and having talked myself out of ordering this type of fish preparation previously, I nonetheless decided to go ahead and try the snapper, at \$9.95.

Before the entree arrived, I slipped white wine in a delicate glass, at the table with candle lights, and tried a hard roll, not served warm, which would have been a nice touch. The tossed salad with the house dressing, herbal ranch, also was good but not out of the ordinary.

The red snapper, which I was told

was topped with tomatoes, green pepper and onions Italian-style, arrived with the ample amount of fish overwhelmed by the abundance of the topping. The fish was well-blackened, translucent and not overcooked inside, but the too-spley, to me, taste prevented one from being able to appreciate any of the fish's mild flavor.

I had ordered mixed vegetables, without realizing the extent of the fish's topping, but the waiter willingly exchanged the big serving of mixed veggies for rice pilaf, which I requested instead. The rice pilaf was flavorful, and a real complement to the fish, cooling the palate from the spiciness of the entree.

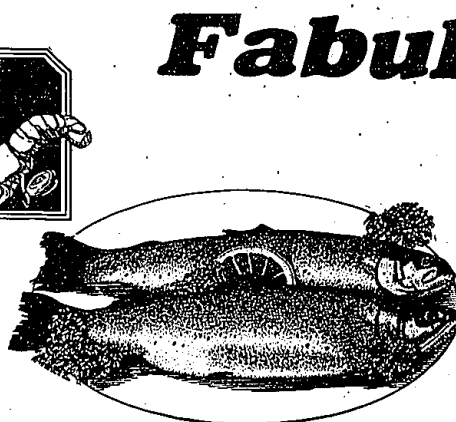
Scallops of Rochester, 1002 Main. Phone 658-2525.

CHARLEY'S CRAB, a restaurant adjoining the Northfield-Hilton, has an extensive single-sheet menu, printed daily, listing all the fresh catches, along with offerings from the raw bar and dozens of other seafood selections.

The restaurant's spectacular decor is carried out in the more formal main dining room, casual dining areas upstairs and down, and the main floor cocktail lounge. A carved King Neptune and cornucopia, pictures of sailing ships, and boating paraphernalia are some of the decorative touches.

In the main dining room, where I asked to be seated, carved wood paneling from a Grosse Pointe mansion enhances the walls and the cathedral ceiling. Mirrors, a large expanse of bay window and leaded glass are other accents.

Continued on Next Page



Fabulous Fish!

Tempt
your seafood
tastebuds at
area restaurants

Jazz artists, organizers getting together

Arts Midwest will present its Jazz Workshop for the second straight year, Saturday, April 26, at the Detroit Jazz Center, 1555 Woodward, on the third floor of the David Whitney Building, in Detroit.

For registration information contact: William Jenkins, Jr., Arts Mid-

west, 528 Hennepin Ave., Suite 310, Minneapolis, Minn. 55403, or phone (612) 341-0755.

The Jazz Workshop brings together

or jazz artists, jazz support organizations and jazz presenters for a day of information on everything from reaching new audiences to contracts and touring.

Unpink's
PRESENTS
Starline

ALL STAR REVUE

Neil Diamond
Tina Turner
Barry Manilow
Wayne Newton
Diana Ross
Boy George
Stevie Wonder
Bobby Darin
Roy Orbison

A Spectacular Vegas Style Stage Production.
Come see the famous look alike star impersonators performing LIVE! See your favorite stars!
Music By: The Starline Orchestra
Also Featuring: Beautiful Dancing Show Girls!
Showtimes: Tues. thru Saturday 7:30 P.M. and 10:30 P.M.
Tues. Wed. Thurs. 7:30 P.M. and 10:30 P.M.
Showtimes 8:00 P.M. 10:10 P.M. 7 Mile At Telegraph Cover Charge

Phone 531-9000

Meadow Brook Theatre
proudly presents
Neil Simon's comedy
THE GOOD DOCTOR
Now through April 20
Tonight at 8 p.m.
Call 377-3300
for tickets
Visa/MasterCard Ticketworld and AAA outlets

Enjoy Neil Simon's hilarious script as he describes:

Surgery The Drowned Man The Seduction The Sneeze The Audition

Presented in cooperation with
WMJC 94.7 FM
WHND 56 AM

MEADOW BROOK'S GREAT ACTORS!
Congratulations to former Meadow Brook actor **WILLIAM HURT** for winning the Oscar for Best Actor

"Man and Superman" 1976

KEEGO TWIN CINEMA
On Orchard Lake Rd. at Oak Lake Rd.
10 miles west of Telegraph 662-1900

\$1.50 ALL SEATS
SEN. THURS.

I. OUT OF AFRICA (PG)
EXCLUSIVE DOUBLE FEATURE
II. MURPHY'S ROMANCE
(PG-13)
SHOWING WITH
8 1/2 WEEKS (R)

good tastes
Enjoy the many good tastes
of the Mon Jin Lau

Mon Jin Lau
Authentic
15555 LAKE RD. N. 11000
689-2332

DISTINCTIVE CUISINE OF
ALL CHINA • EXOTIC SPIRITS
Share our good tastes with a friend