

table talk

Accent on Michigan at Muer restaurants

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

An attractive turquoise blue menu accented with green is attached to the regular menu at many of the Chuck Muer restaurants, celebrating "M-M-M-CHICAGAN" through Thursday, Aug. 28.

All fresh Michigan foods are emphasized, but much of the attention goes to the bounty from Michigan waters. "Great Lakes Fresh Catch" entrees include Lake Superior lake trout, Northern Michigan rainbow trout, Lake Superior white fish, Lake Michigan perch and pan-fried walleye sautéed in black walnut butter.

A recent visit to Southfield Charley's provided the opportunity to sample the walleye, which has an extra-special taste when the walnut flavoring is added. Also sampled was smoked salmon fettuccine, noodles lightly touched with a cream sauce and ample hunks of salmon.

Another fish entree available is a basket of lake smelt. A summertime Country Grill features char-grilled lake trout along with herb-marinated chicken breast and barbecued pork ribs.

AMONG THE appetizers is a Great Lakes Smoked Fish Sampler, combining lake trout, white fish and rainbow trout. These bits of fish with a smoky flavor definitely tempt the palate.

Complimentary starters are included with dinner. Tomato, cucumber, red onion vinaigrette salad, creamy cucumber and onion salad, and Michigan navy bean and onion marinated salad have just enough zip to bring out the best in the vegetables.

Besides the fish sampler, appetizers include Great Northern bean soup, with Michigan beans, and gazpacho, with fresh Michigan vegetables.

Other entrees sampled were Herb Chicken Breasts and Stir-Fry Duckling, both nicely prepared. The duckling breast sautéed with broccoli and Chinese vegetables is the first time

At Rhinoceros

Mark Schwartz of Troy, formerly sous chef at the Cafe Lasserre three-star French restaurant in Tempe, Ariz., is now head chef at the Rhinoceros restaurant in Detroit. Light sauces for seafood and wild game dishes are a specialty Schwartz is presenting.

Petker's Place

Petker's Place, in the Campus Corners Shopping Center in Rochester, serves up a variety of tasty menu items in an informal setting. Wood paneled walls and booths with latticed wood dividers set the scene. Old-fashioned ceiling fans and Tiffany-style lamps are overhead. At lunch, bargains include soup and salad for \$2.95, \$3.25 with pizza. Sunday brunch special served from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. is \$3.25 for eggs, sausage, bacon, potatoes, bagels, muffins, waffles, hot cakes and French toast. There's a separate bar, with caricatures of customers and employees and a separate video games room.

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duck has been offered at Muer's restaurants.

Roundout the entrees is basil fettuccine with fresh summer vegetables. Price of the entrees ranges from \$6.50 to \$11.25.

MICHIGAN wines may be ordered to accompany the meal, the selection of five including Grand Traverse Chardonnay and Johannisburg Riesling, Fenn Valley Vidal Blanc, St. Julian Village Blush and Tabor Hill Vidal Blanc Demi Sec. Each may be ordered by the glass or bottle. I sampled three of the four and found them interesting as a change of pace.

Desserts are the berries - fresh blueberries with heavy cream, or the cherries - tart pie, or sweet Michigan cherry ice. There's also classic Sanders Hot Fudge Cream Puff and Vernors Gingerale Float. Or you can buy a box of Grunwald's Michigan-made chocolate walnut fudge, to go.

Youtiful servers wear denim aprons and straw hats, in farmer fashion, and at the entrance is displayed fresh produce, which may be purchased by customers.

Eleven Muer restaurants feature the special Michigan menu (the event is a joint offering by Muer and the Michigan Department of Agriculture). They include Bloomfield Charley's in West Bloomfield, Diggers in Farmington Hills, Chuck Muer's Charley's in Livonia, Meriwether's in Southfield and other Charley's restaurants.

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There's a real family resemblance between Roy Disney and his late uncle Walt. Roy looks like a thinner version of the famed showman, Walt Disney, right down to the mustache.

Roy Disney is vice chairman of the board of the Walt Disney Co. in Burbank, Calif. He also is owner - along with his wife, Patty, and their four children - of the Shamrock Broadcasting Co. Inc. He was in the Detroit area recently at a party celebrating the joining of two country radio stations.

Shamrock just acquired radio station WCXI (1130 AM), to pair with its WWWW (108.7 FM).

Live country music was the order of the day at the party, where special guests included Mickey Gilley and the Girls Next Door, singing with the crowd and performing with the band.

PARTY GUESTS gathered at the Bosford Inn Coach House, then drifted outdoors to hear the band playing on the patio of the historic inn in Farmington Hills.

Roy Disney, remembers Uncle Walt with affection. Mickey Gilley, "I have memories of him as a very creative, intriguing sort of a fellow," he said.

"This is my favorite Walt Disney story. I had chicken pox as a kid. He was working on 'Pinocchio.' He sat on the edge of my bed and told the whole story of 'Pinocchio.' I saw the film a year later, and it was not half as interesting.

"Uncle Walt had a special storytelling quality. He could just hypnotize."

Roy Disney denied another story

about his famous uncle, the one about Walt Disney's body being frozen after the movie mogul and Disneyland creator died in December 1966.

"That's just a silly rumor. He was cremated at Forest Lawn in Glendale," Roy Disney said.

WALT DISNEY and Roy's father - who was also named Roy - worked together.

"My father was his partner, right from the beginning."

Each brother handled a different aspect, Roy being the financial one and Walt the creative one.

"I've always said he was every bit the genius that Walt was," Roy Disney said of his dad.

Roy Disney, the son, started working at the Disney studio in the mid-1950s, after he got out of college. "I sort of grew with it."

He spent 20 years there, involved with such award-winning nature films as "The Vanishing Prairie" and "The Living Desert."

Eventually, he left the studio but returned less than two years ago, under new management, which he helped install. Currently he heads up the animation department.

When Disney first left the studio he was thinking it would be smart to diversify his holdings. With his background in entertainment, he decided to become part of the broadcasting industry. After a year of negotiations, in 1978 he bought Star Broadcasting, which was owned by William Buckley, and changed the name to Shamrock.

"It's named after an ocean-going sailboat," Disney said. "We have a

lot of Irish in the family, and painted the sailboat dark green."

WITH THE acquisition and development of Shamrock Broadcasting, Disney now owns stations in many other states as well as Michigan.

At the time Disney bought radio station WWWW, it was a rock station. A year and a half later, the station switched to a country format.

"We started looking for an AM format to go with it," he said. The search, to pair two stations, for advertising buys, led to WCXI. "We're delighted with it."

"We're the only country station in Detroit," Disney said. Asked if he likes country music, he replied, "I love it. I like all kinds of music."

There are a lot of country listeners out there. "Six to 10 percent of the Detroit market are listening to country," he said.

Being in broadcasting is fun, and so is being an officer with the Walt Disney Co. Where else can a guy have a business card with a picture of Mickey Mouse on it?

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