



Lindel (left), Nancy Minckler, Howard Egan and Dody Brodersen are a yuppie couple and their bickering parents (his father and her mother) in the Somerset Dinner Theatre production of "Squabbles."

There's little to squabble about with this fine comedy production

Performances of "Squabbles" by Marshall Karp, presented by Jimmy Launce Productions, continue Fridays-Saturdays through Jan. 17 at Somerset Dinner Theatre at Somerset Mall in Troy. Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. at Sebastian's or 6:30 p.m. at Cafe Jardin. Theater-only tickets also are available. Doors open at 8 p.m. for the show in the lower-level theater. For ticket information, call 649-6629.

By Cathie Breidenbach
special writer

"Squabbles" at the Somerset Dinner Theatre is a jolly evening's entertainment about a pregnant yuppie couple (Alice and Jerry) who share their house in Connecticut with her big-mouthed, cheerful father, Abe, and his always-have-the-last-word mother, Mildred.

When it comes to slinging words, Alice (Nancy Minckler), who is a New York lawyer, and Jerry (Lindel Salow), who writes advertising jingles, are no match for their parents. To this articulate foursome add Hector, the cheerful Mexican gardener who shows up in every crisis talking goodness in wetback English. Kenneth Kelley's Hector is surely the most lovable, blue-eyed Mexican in all Connecticut.

Director Rebecca Smith allows Marshall Karp's picket-fence domestic comedy to make its points about intergenerational diplomacy and the



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art of aging wisely. Even picket fences have sharp points.

A lion's share of the credit for the play's delightful warmth goes to Howard Egan's ebullient portrayal of the 72-year-old Abe who moves in with his son-in-law and daughter after he has a heart attack. Abe believes a good squabble a day keeps him fit and healthy. He lacks a worthy squabbling partner until Mildred's house burns down and she moves in, too. Dody Brodersen more than holds her own as the assertive Mildred.

WHEN BABY arrives, Alice and Jerry decide they don't want to raise their child in a war zone, so either Abe or Mildred must go. The kicker comes when the two sworn enemies fall in love and decide to move out and bicker happily ever after.

Somerset Dinner Theatre offers theatergoers the choice of restaurants — Sebastian's for an elegant, gourmet meal, as well as dinner at the Cafe Jardin in the center court of the mall. Theater-only tickets also are available.

In Sebastian's elegant black-and-white dining room, dinner theater patrons are served a generous salad, assorted tasty breads and a choice of

four gourmet entrees, which recently included beef, lamb, salmon, chicken, and beef tournedos, plus tea or coffee and a selection from Sebastian's delectable pastry tray.

In an era when gourmet is too often used to describe any food not picked up at a drive-through window, Sebastian's lives up to the old-world meaning of the word. Clearly the chef takes time with every sauce and every garnish to perfect subtle textures and tastes. The food is superb.

The chef attends to the visual pleasure of dining with beautifully presented dishes, and he shows unexpected whimsy in the presentation of the seafood pasta which is framed on the plate by a fish-shaped croissant — head at one end, tail at the other.

Cathie Breidenbach of West Bloomfield has always loved theater. A former high-school English teacher, she works in public relations, advertising and as a freelance writer.

Le Bordeaux on the way to becoming really great

Your traveling taster visits area eateries and rates them on a 100-point scale. Up to 30 points are awarded for ambience, which includes general atmosphere and service; 55 points for food, and 15 points for price-value rating. A total count of 59 points or less indicates a restaurant is not recommended; 60-74 points signify from passing to good; 75-89 points designate very good with some extraordinary features, and 90-100 points show that a very special dining experience awaits you.

LE BORDEAUX, 30325 W. Six Mile, Livonia (421-7370), has a sharp, almost elegant feeling, which is achieved by the dramatic black ceiling and walls. The cream accents, numerous silk flowers and dark mirrors add to this effect. The owners have made a conscious effort to create a special atmosphere and, except for some "frying" around the edges, they have generally succeeded. The main dining room became both noisy and smoky as the evening progressed, and some acoustical tiles and better ventilation would make this much more appealing, especially to non-smoking, romantic couples. There is live music and dancing every night but Monday, and this helps to attract a nicely dressed (sport coats, for example) crowd of all ages. Our reservations were promptly honored, and dinner took an hour and three quarters. **GENERAL ATMOSPHERE — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 13.**

Although our waitress was very pleasant, service was a definite weak spot in the restaurant. The bussing, especially, was active and attentive but poorly executed. By the end of the meal, neither the waitress nor the busboy had cleared our pre-dinner drink glasses, our bread basket or the butter. The coffee came with more spilled in the saucer than our left-over cocktail napkin could absorb. The ashy had cherry stems in it when we sat down at the table and remained that way. What a shame to detract in this way from what much of the food and atmosphere try to achieve. Some training and effort in this important area would really improve the dining ex-



a counting for taste

D. Gustibus

perience here. **SERVICE — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 10.**

Our waitress recommended the oysters Rockefeller (\$8.75), and they were thoroughly enjoyable. The six oysters were attractively presented, well seasoned and plentifully filled with spinach. They had a subtle garlic flavor. The drinks were noticeably stronger than average, and when the check came and we found they were \$4.50 for premium liquor, we understood why. The delicious, warm bread sticks also added to the meal. **DRINKS, APPETIZERS AND BREAD — 10 points maximum. Points awarded — 9.**

A choice of soup or salad comes with the entrees, but the salad was unremarkable. Although the vegetables were fresh, the salad was primarily lettuce with a slice of cucumber and a cherry tomato. The two dressings we tried — ranch and creamy garlic — were heavy and almost identical in taste, and both were dumped in a glob on the top of the salad. **SALAD — 5 points maximum. Points awarded — 3.**

Someone in the kitchen cares about the entrees. The daily special, poached dover sole stuffed with shrimp and crab and served with a newburg sauce (\$16.95) was outstanding. The sole was flavorful but mild. The sauce was excellently prepared. The presentation was superb, with star-shaped fruit slices and delicious vegetables. The spaghetti ala bucaniera (\$10.95), a specialty, was prepared with shrimp and crabmeat and a mornay sauce. It, too, was delicious and attractively served, but a bit heavy compared with the sole.

The side order of spaghetti, served with the sole, had firm pasta with a real tomato and meat sauce. It would have made an excellent entree. **ENTREE, VEGETABLES AND GARNISHES — 30 points maximum. Points awarded — 28.**

What a sad way to finish a fine meal! First, at the suggestion of the waitress we tried the marble cheesecake (\$2.50). When we found it lacking in flavor and overcooked, we tried a second choice — a lemon tart. What a lemon! The waitress admitted that the desserts are not made in the restaurant. Perhaps a new source would help. It's certainly needed. **DESSERT — 10 points maximum. Points awarded — 4.**

Despite the inconsistencies, the meal was worth \$56 per couple, tip included, especially since music and dancing are available. This is a very nice place for dining. The prices are fair, the portions are generous. **PRICE/VALUE — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 13.**

A Counting for Taste — 100 points maximum. Total points awarded: 80. Le Bordeaux has most of the ingredients for becoming a fine restaurant. The shortcomings could be easily corrected. If that happens, this will be "the" place in Livonia for a special dining experience.

D. Gustibus welcomes your reactions, comments and suggestions of favorite restaurants in communities served by the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Write to D. Gustibus in care of Observer & Eccentric, Entertainment Department, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham 48012.

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