

MONDAY, JUNE 26, 1995

# TASTE

## TASTE BUDDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

### Master the art of making fried chicken

I've had more than my share of great culinary experiences. Dining with Julia Child, learning with Giuliano Buglioli, sipping wine with Anthony Dias Blue and eating barbecue with Merle Ellis have helped make my job one of the best. But when people ask me what was the one culinary event that was a "turning point" in my culinary career, I'd have to admit it was eating real fried chicken at a shack called Huck's at the Kansas City Farmer's Market. It was fried chicken the likes of which I've never tasted before. With the help of the fast food industry, many of us have lost our taste memory of good fried chicken. Whether it be made for a Sunday supper or a wicker basket picnic in the park, the art of making great fried chicken seems to be associated with a corrugated cardboard bucket.

### Indulge

First off, let's set aside the notion that all things have to be "dietized." I belong to the Julia Child School of Thought and believe that you can still cook with butter and cream. Not all of us are card carrying members of the Susan Powter "You Can't Eat Fat" fan club. I would never suggest eating fried chicken every day and regale myself as a healthy eater. But how can I make fried chicken like I ate in Kansas City? The art of making a good fried chicken is a little more involved than cutting up a chicken and opening a package of Shake and Bake. You need a good heavy, cast iron skillet, the right sized chicken and the best oil. Speaking of oil, remember the old Crisco commercial: "It all comes back but one tablespoon!" It's true! According to food scientist Tina Seelig, author of "Epicurean Laboratory" (Freeman Publishers Copyright 1991) if the water in the food you are frying is kept above the boiling point (212 degrees F.) the outward pressure of the escaping water vapor keeps oil from soaking into the food. If the oil is not hot enough, on the other hand, it will seep into the food, making it greasy.

### Cooking method

I started out with the biggest cast iron fry pan I could get my hands on, basically because it was large enough to hold 10 pieces of chicken. After the first batch, I found out that the bigger size was a handicap because the perimeter of the pan sat off the burner.

The chicken in the center of the pan was scorched while the chicken on the outside of the pan was greasy. Common sense told me to go for the 12 inch cast iron skillet and it worked like a dream.

A batch of tests done by a leading cooking magazine found that for optimum results, chicken should be soaked in milk, half and half or buttermilk.

For best results, the chicken should be soaked for a minimum of two hours. When it comes to a good all purpose coating for fried chicken, tests by a major food mag found that basically seasoned all purpose flour worked best. When we talk basic, we mean basic. Salt and fresh ground pepper sifted into the all purpose flour was all that touched my chicken. Speaking of salt and pepper, a generous dash of both in the buttermilk bath also worked well.

Now for the most healthy news of all. When the James Gang tested the fried chicken both skinless and regular, no discernible difference could be found. We all know that chicken skin is just about one of the worst things we can put into our bodies and now, when you make my recipe, you can choose to enjoy it regular or natural. I distinctly remember seeing 50 gallon barrels of lard in that Kansas City fried chicken palooza and while it might have been the method of the house, most cookbooks agree that basic vegetable shortening offered a consistent mahogany color and was most odor free of all the fats. Again, the secret here is to maintain a 350 degree throughout the cooking process and the only way to accomplish that short of an electric skillet is to use a good thermometer.

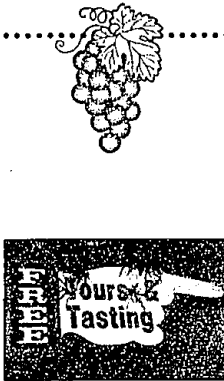
Lastly, cover the pan only during the first half of the cooking time.

See Larry James' family-tested recipes inside. Chef Larry is a free-lance writer for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave a voice mail message for him dial (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1886.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Russian River pinot noir is at the head of its class
- Red, white and blue ribs menu.



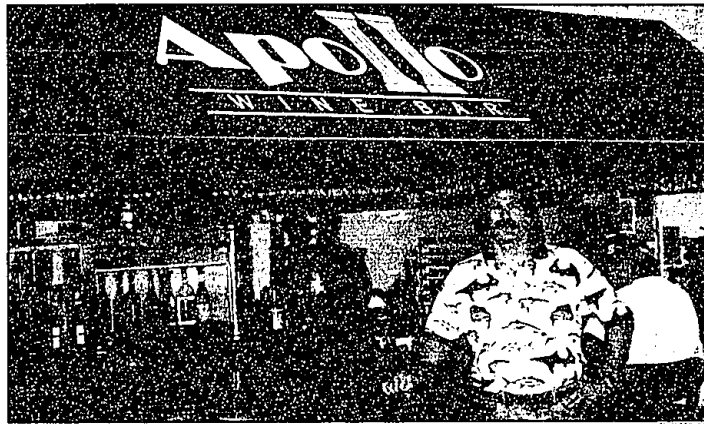
# St. Julian launches Apollo

**A**pollo Wine Bar and Trattoria is Michigan wine industry's newest innovation. Located in the rural community of Paw Paw, heart of southwest Michigan wine country, Apollo is trendy, stylish and on target with what's hot about food, wine and fun. Indeed, it's lively and live at the Apollo.

The brainchild behind Apollo is St. Julian Winery owner and president Dave Braganini. "For some time I've wanted to own a restaurant that would showcase wine and food," he said. "When the project was near completion, I decided to name it after my father, Apollo, the visionary person responsible for the fun I'm having running St. Julian."

Although dedicated last October, it's only since spring that the Apollo is up and clicking. It's rapidly becoming a destination restaurant for western Michigan tourists. Constructed adjacent to St. Julian Winery's newly-renovated tasting room on Kalamazoo Street in Paw Paw, Apollo is alive indoors, but with an outdoor ambience. A bright blue awning above the wine bar gives it that feel. Bar stools are comfortable and well-spaced. Tables are on a main and second level, accessed by a stairway, as well as on the entranceway patio.

Braganini is a far nut, a collector and a sports aficionado. The Apollo is but one glimpse of the man and his interests. The front end of a hot pink 1950 Cadillac hangs from a wall and catches a diner's eye immediately. As wall artwork, other memorabilia can be viewed, along with some prized catches from the sea. Giving the distinct impression of a respect for Michigan's wine traditions, additional wall hangings



Live at the Apollo: Dave Braganini, St. Julian Winery President, at the Apollo in Paw Paw.

# Apollo

BY RAY & ELEANOR HEALD • SPECIAL WRITERS

detail a history of St. Julian winery. And the trattoria food? Bread and pastries are made fresh daily. Chefs Louis Roden, who recently graduated at the top of his class from the Grand Rapids Junior College culinary program, and Steve Kendall in conjunction with their staff serve in-season local products on a menu changing weekly. Prices range from \$3.25 to \$4.95 for sandwiches, \$3 to \$5.25 for salads, \$5.95 to \$8.95 for pasta. Pizzas and focaccia range from \$7.45 to \$14.45 for the large 16-inch. Much menu inspiration comes from Braganini's wife, Eva, an accomplished cook.

Within minutes of being seated at lunch, we were presented with an antipasto platter, complete with fruit, salami, peppers, peperoncini and Braganini's favorite asiago cheese. "It's the best all-purpose cheese for wine," he commented.

The focaccia is to die for! Two delicious soups are made daily, one of which always incorporates a St. Julian wine in the recipe. Among the sandwiches is an Italian-style Muffuletta, that is both interesting and tasty. Winemaker Chas Catherman even has his own salad, simply named Chas' Salad with bleu cheese, green peppers, olives, tomato, artichokes, and mushrooms topped off with the restaurant's garlic bleu cheese dressing.

Only St. Julian wines are served by the glass. "Wine by the bottle is

not offered," Braganini explained. "I want people to try more than one of our wines. They can only do that with by-the-glass service." Generous pours range from \$2.50 to \$5. You don't know much about St. Julian wines? A white or red wine sampler (\$3.50) will give you a 1.5-ounce pour of four different white or red wines.

Every Friday after 6:30 p.m., the place gets jumping and it's truly live at the Apollo with a band during champagne happy hour extending through dinner until 9 p.m. The evening sparkles with the broad spectrum of bubblics produced at St. Julian from Blanc de Blanc through Spumante. And there's St. Julian produced Gunga-Din tapped cider from apples grown in Michigan's magic town Coloma. More beer-like than cider, it will be available in bottles throughout the state in July. Braganini is both proprietor and maître d' on Saturday evenings.

And for you folks vacationing in the northwest, St. Julian has a new location in Traverse City, a stone's throw from West Bay at 127 E. Front Street sharing facilities with Bananarama. In summer, the facility is open every Friday night for Friday Night Live when Front Street is turned into a pedestrian mall with live entertainment.

For voice mail messages - dial 953-2047, mailbox 1864.

### The Apollo Wine Bar and Trattoria

Getting there? Take I-94 to exit 60 (Lawton and Paw Paw). Turn north in the direction of Paw Paw. In a short sprint, Apollo Wine Bar is on your left, adjacent to the winery. Hours 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday. No reservations accepted. Information: Call (616) 657-5568.

### Frankenmuth Winery

127 S. Main St.  
Free tours and tasting  
Retail outlet  
(517) 622-3281

Maclellan City  
404 S. Huron St.  
Free tasting  
Retail outlet  
(616) 438-5624

Marquette  
Marquette Place  
1-75, exit 11  
Free tasting  
Retail outlet  
(313) 422-8400

Paw Paw  
1-94 at exit 127  
Free tasting  
Retail outlet  
(517) 531-3788

Paw Paw Winery  
One block north of I-94, exit 60  
Free tours and tasting  
Retail outlet  
(616) 657-5568

Sharon Plot  
1-94 at exit 6  
Free tasting  
Retail outlet  
(616) 469-3150

Traverse City  
Downtown  
127 East Front St.  
Retail outlet  
(616) 822-0337

### St. Julian locations in Michigan



## Don't lose your cool, serve turkey salads

**Cool salad:**  
Zesty Grilled Turkey Salad with Raspberry Vinaigrette. Grilled turkey tenderloin, crunchy water chestnuts, and raspberry vinaigrette all combine to make this entree salad a beautiful summer treat.



### BY KEELY WYGONIK STAFF WRITER

Keep your cool when everyone asks, "what's for dinner," by serving salads made with turkey, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

From Mexico and the Greek Islands to Brazil and the Caribbean, turkey lends itself to a myriad of herbs and spices, as well as grilling. "Grilling fresh turkey makes sense," said Rick Shenoweth, director of sales for Shady Brook Farms, the country's third-largest supplier of fresh turkey. "Not only do people eat lighter foods in the summer, they also want to be away from a hot kitchen."

If it's too hot to cook, use fully-cooked, oven-roasted turkey breast to make a salad. Turkey Salad with Poppy Seed Balsamic Vinaigrette, a recipe from the National Turkey Federation, is a quick, easy salad to take to picnics, or enjoy at home. Pineapple juice and Dijon-style mustard create the perfect balance of sweet and tangy flavors to complement this festive salad.

Spicy Grilled Turkey Salad with Raspberry Vinaigrette is a great way to bring out the best in