

DINING

Wooden Roast serves Persian fare

BY RENEE SROGLUND
SPECIAL WRITER

The Wooden Roast in downtown Northville is not for the hurried diner.

"Heart and art is involved in everything we make," said owner Cyrus Haririan. "Every single food we make is time-consuming."

Take the Domisia rice, for example, which accompanies every entree. Mounds of perfectly prepared grains dusted with saffron. "The way we make the rice is soak it in salted water for 24 hours," Haririan said. "We drain it and cook it in fresh water. When it is a little more than half cooked, we rinse it, which takes all the starch out of it. Then we steam cook it."

And then there are the fillet mignon shish kabobs, thin slices of fillet seared onto flat skewers and grilled on an open hearth. "The kabobs are our signature dish because no one else in the world makes it like we do," Haririan said. "USDA choice fillet."

In addition to fillet, chicken and vegetarian kabobs, there's koubideh, two skewers of delicately seasoned and shaped ground beef. Everything is grilled on the brick-wooded hearth, the focal point of the restaurant.

When Haririan claims that "heart" is involved in every dish, he is speaking more than figuratively.

"Persian food for the last 4,000 years is considered health food," he said. "We don't use oil. Everybody else marinates their kabobs in oil. We marinate our kabobs in onion. It's very time-consuming to make that kind of kabob."

Customers attest to the Wooden Roast's heart-healthiness. Chandra Kant Pujara of West Bloomfield Township ordered the vegetarian shish kabob. "All the vegetables are cooked with-

out any oil or grease," he said. "And it's not too spicy." He pronounced his dish "excellent."

His friend, Hadi Piraka of Farmington Hills, was dining on eggplant and rice. While he also said the food was "excellent," it is the restaurant's atmosphere that keeps him coming back once or twice a week. "The owner is very courteous, very generous with his guests. He gives you more than you order. Not just me, other people. I feel like I'm home."

There's very little not to like about the Wooden Roast. It's small. It's intimate. And its owner treats his customers like personal guests. Very soon the menu will be expanded to include several additional fish, beef and chicken entrees. Haririan also plans to internationalize his kitchen by adding some German dishes.

No matter what changes the menu may undergo, dining at the Wooden Roast always will

Wooden Roast

- Location: 148 Mary Alexander Ct. in Northville (810) 347-1200
- Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday. Closed Monday.
- Decor: Light, airy, understated. Melodic Persian background music.
- Menu: Persian-style appetizers, soup, salads, kabobs (fillet mignon, chicken and vegetable).
- Cost: \$4.50 to \$12.95. (Most entrees \$5.95 to \$10.95.) Lunch special: Soup, sandwich (including burgers and pitas), beverage: \$3.95.
- Reservations: Recommended on weekends.
- Credit cards: All major credit cards accepted.

require patience. It has to do with quality. "People may have to wait a little longer, but everything is cooked to order," Haririan said. So, relax. Enjoy the ambiance. Duck some wonderful, warm Persian bread into a creamy dip made with spinach, garlic, wal-

Gracious host: Wooden Roast owner Cyrus Haririan in the restaurant decorated with poems of Omar Khayyam embossed on copper



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRIDGES

RESTAURANT SPECIALS

Send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wygonik, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or by fax (313) 591-7270.

Menu specials

Ann Arbor Real Seafood Co.
Oyster & Beer Fest 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 12, 341 S. Main Street, Ann Arbor. Fresh oyster, clams, mussels, and linguine with clam sauce. Cost \$30.95 per person. (313) 769-5900

Ristorante di Modesta

Dinara can now brew their own gourmet coffee at the table in individual European-style press pots. The restaurant at 29410 Northwestern, Southfield, celebrated its 10th anniversary on June 25. (810) 358-0344

Pancake Chef

Breakfast "specialty" restaurant with complete lunch and dinner menu, including buffet on weekends. 35230 Central City Parkway, Westland. Across from Westland Mall. (313) 522-3337

Alexander the Great

Ribs for two \$14.95 at the restaurant, 34733 Warren, Westland. Movie and dinner packages available. (313) 326-5410

Dining al fresco

Bates Street Cafe

On the Van Dusen Terrace of the Community House, 180 South Bates Street, Birmingham. Open 11:30-2:30 p.m. for weekday lunches, 5:30 p.m. Thursdays for light suppers preceding the Concerts in the Park Music series at neighboring Shain Park. (810) 644-5832

Cook's Garden Cafe

Outdoor grill, 225 East Maple, Birmingham open until 10 p.m. Monday-Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. Sundays. Outdoor grill menu includes steaks, chicken, ribs, tuna steaks, whitefish and swordfish. (810) 645-9595

The Money Tree

Yellow market umbrellas and wrought iron tables await at The Money Market Tree's European style sidewalk cafe, 333 W. Fort Street, Detroit. Open 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday, 5-9 p.m. Thursday-Saturday. (313) 961-2445

Events

Culinary Extravaganza

Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 17 in the Waterman Center on campus. Sixty of metro Detroit's best restaurants will offer tastes of gourmet foods and beverages. Tickets \$40 per person; two for \$75. (313) 462-4417

Festival serves up taste of popular restaurants

Big Fish Too, Hershel's Bakery, Picano's Stelline, and Fox & Hounds are just a few of metro Detroit's finest restaurants on the menu at Michigan Taste Fest June 30 to July 4 in Detroit's New Center.

The festival will feature more than 35 local and regional restaurants selling their specialties. Tickets for "samples" and "tastes" will be available at \$5 for nine tickets. For more information, call (313) 872-0188. Things will be cooking on "restaurant row" as eateries compete in the Best of the Best — recognizing outstanding booth design, restaurant style and themes.

A bit of the British Isles will flavor Taste Fest with British ales from Deacon Brodie's British Pub on the lower level of a double-decker bus. Coffee Lovers can be the first experience the new "Mocha Java Cooler."

Savor the cuisine of each day's featured restaurant Friday — Stelline, Troy Oxford Inn, Royal

Onk; Friday and Saturday, Fox & Hounds, Bloomfield Hills; Monday, O'Leary's Tea Room, Detroit; and Tuesday, Oliverio's, Royal Oak.

Participating restaurants include: American Coney Classics, Arriva Italia Ristorante, Bangkok Cuisine, Carl's Chop House, Deacon Brodie's Tavern, Duggan's Irish Pub, Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen Cafe, Mesquite Creek Steakhouse, Mack Avenue Diner, Mario's, Maria's Front Room, National Coney Island, Paye's Woodward Inn, Papa Romano's, Penecok Restaurant, Pegasus in the Fisher, Risata at The Second City, Silver Spoon, Steve's Soul Food Restaurant, Sunrise Sunset Saloon, Joe Dumar's Fieldhouse, The Almond Hut, The Original Busemi's, Hokkaido, Franklin East Restaurant, Murdick's Mackinac Island Fudge, Savino Sorbet, Stroh's Ice Cream, and Premiere Pie.

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SUMMER NIGHTS

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JUNE

1 Fabian's Rock & Roll Party • Team Gary Lewis & The Playboys, Mitch Miller, Gary Puckett and the Coney Bears

JULY

1 Sarah McLachlan • Stephen Feuring fireworks following the show

2 Battered Ladies • Wally Bragg fireworks following the show

3 Reggae Sunsplash • 5 pm
Classical Rock • Beechwood Lovers Upstairs • 12 pm
Russian Favorites w/conductor Joe Neeme Javi • 8 pm
Laser Light Spectacular • Hollywood Spectacular • 8:30 pm

4 Shawn Colvin • Stewart Francis fireworks following the show

5 Pat Metheny Group • Good

6 Bob McGrath • 2 pm & 6 pm • 9425
Bob from "Sesame Street"

7 Detroit Symphony Orchestra • Good

8 Beechwood's Big Five w/conductor Neeme Javi • 8 pm
Classical Rock • Beechwood Lovers Upstairs • 12 pm
Russian Favorites w/conductor Joe Neeme Javi • 8 pm
Laser Light Spectacular • Hollywood Spectacular • 8:30 pm

9 American Family Theatre's • 8425
Phonchio • 11 am

10 The David Sanborn Group

AUG

1 Dave Koz

2 Weezer • Teenage Fanclub and The Dog

3 The Robert Cray Band • 7444

4 Judy Collins/David Gates formerly in Detroit fireworks following the show

5 Dave Matthews Band • Detroit fans

6 The Neville Brothers featuring Aaron Neville with the Neville • 7 pm • 9425

SEPT

1 Roger Whittaker

2 Joan Baez

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