

DINING

Try a slice of Rochester's 'Big Tomato'

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO
STAFF WRITER

Rochester's old Foxy's by Machus in the Great Oaks Mall has reopened with a new interior design, a new menu, and new name that shoppers and area residents can really sink their teeth into...

The Big Tomato (named after its signature entree "Big Tomato Soup" served hot or cold anytime) is patterned after a European bistro. It was designed, according to Bob Machus "to be casual, comfortable, intimate, fun and friendly."

By day, the Big Tomato is filled with shoppers taking lunch breaks, neighbors meeting for dessert and coffee, and local business people after a bite to eat. In the evening, area residents stop in for a glass of wine, a meal out with the family, or an order of lemon meringue flan.

The food is eclectic Mediterranean, drawing from the shores of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa," he explained. "Interpretations of Italian, Greek, Tunisian, Moroccan, Algerian, Spanish and Middle Eastern cuisines are featured."

The Big Tomato's executive chef Peter Lowell was formerly the Sous Chef under Ed Janos at the City Grill in Birmingham which is another Machus "re-invention." Mark Weiss, who managed the old Foxy's, continues to manage operations at the Big Tomato. One by one, each area

Machus Restaurant is being updated and re-interpreted for a '90s audience. The Machus Red Fox in Bloomfield Hills is next on the list.

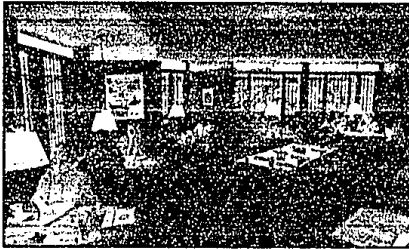
The Big Tomato welcomes its patrons with cozy seating under a quote painted across the wall from a song by country singer Guy Clark: "Only two things that money can't buy, and that's true love and home grown tomatoes."

Barbara Winger of Rochester Hills finished off a cup of tomato soup and veggie-grain burger on a house-made kaiser roll, with glass of iced tea. She was anxious to share her impressions of the restaurant.

"The service was excellent and the lunch delicious," she proclaimed. "I feel like I've stuck to my diet and eaten a meal that's good for me."

Vegetarians will find many entrees on the menu to choose from, including Eggplant Falafel with tahini dressing and a mixed green salad garnish \$4.95; a Greek Salad Pita stuffed with feta, beef, red onions, calamata olives, tomatoes and a lemon-oregano dressing, \$4.95; Chilled, Steamed Vegetable and Pasta Salad \$5.95.

Children will feel at home eating from the menu that includes chicken fingers, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti (served with butter and parmesan cheese or tomato sauce) and hot dogs.



Tomato surprise: The former Foxy's by Machus at the Great Oaks Mall in Rochester Hills has reopened as a European-styled bistro serving Mediterranean-inspired entrees at moderate prices.

The Big Tomato

- Where: The Great Oaks Mall, Livernols/Walton, Rochester Hills, (810) 652-1177.
- Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday-Tuesday; 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday; 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday; noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.
- Reservations: Accepted.
- Menu: Mediterranean menu. Food is full-flavored and generally low in fat. Wine and beer available.
- Atmosphere: Casual, intimate. Some family-size booths.
- Prices: Low to Moderate.
- Opening benefit: To celebrate the Big Tomato's grand opening, a party to benefit Crittenton Hospital's Pediatric Department, 5:30-9 p.m. Monday, Sept. 21. Tickets \$30. Call the hospital's Community Resource Center, (810) 652-5345. For the occasion, the Big Tomato will serve wines, cheeses and hors d'oeuvres to well-wishers.

RESTAURANT SPECIALS

Send items to be considered for publication to: Neely Wygonik, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 30281 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or by fax (313)591-1270.

Special events

Rishel benefit
Albion's Unique Restaurant Corporation restaurant at 34555 W. 12 Mile Road (between Farmington Road and Drake) Farmington Hills, will hold a benefit supper 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 20 — "Feast for the Cure" to benefit the Barbara Ann Hannanos Cancer Institute, formerly the Michigan Cancer Foundation. Tickets \$40 per person, cash bar will be offered. (810) 443-8200

Golden Mushroom
Jazz in the Mushroom Cellar, corner of 10 Mile and Southfield Road, 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Third annual Celler Reunion 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 15. Food, special prizes. Free admission. No cover and reservations are not required. Female jazz vocalist Nikki Pearce will be performing. Fall season features a series of seven special dinners. The first one "The Land Down Under — Australian Food and Wine Tour," is 6 p.m. Monday, Sept. 18; "The Food and Wine of Tuscany and Beyond Chianti," Monday, Oct. 2. Call for reservations and information. (810) 559-4230

Morton's of Chicago
Nape Valley pioneers Joe and Alice Heltz, founders of Heltz Wine Cellars in St. Helena, Calif. will be the guests of honor at a winemaker's dinner, 6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 18 at the restaurant in Southfield. Seating for 40 guests. Cost \$130 per person, includes tax and gratuities, complimentary valet parking. Call for reservations. (810) 354-0005

America
Series of regional feasts featuring a different part of the United States in a prix fixe three-course meal. Cost \$20 per person, excluding tax and gratuity. Sept. 18 highlights the Southwest; Sept. 25, Creole; Oct. 2, Hawaiian. Call for reservations. (810) 549-2000

Michigan Fall Fest
Savor the flavors of fall, prix fixe dinner, \$36.95 per person, not including tax and gratuity. Feasts begin 7 p.m. It will be offered Wednesday, Sept. 27 at Trattoria Truschetta, (810) 305-5210; Thursday, Sept. 28 at Morels, (810) 642-1094; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 29-30 at Sebastian's Grill, (810) 649-6825. Reservations required.

Farmington Hills D. Demibon's
Oyster & Beer Fest 6:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 27 offers fresh local oysters, clams, mussels, and linguine with clam sauce. Seafood matched with a selection of beers. Advance registration \$29.50 per person, all inclusive, at D. Demibon's Famous Seafood Tavern, 27009 Orchard Lake Road. Call for reservations. (810) 553-7000

The Merchant's Wine Warehouse
Wine & Wok, 8:30-9 p.m. Monday, Sept. 25, Mon Jin Liu Restaurant, 1515 E. Maple Road at Stephenson, Troy. Selection of Cabernets and other red wines, along with Asian appetizers and fresh domestic and imported cheese and fruit. Tickets \$25 in advance. Available at the Merchant's Warehouse in Royal Oak and Dearborn. (810) 546-7770 or (313) 563-8700

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