

DINING

Moose Preserve Bar & Grill celebrates 5th year

By ETHEL SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

Before 11:30 a.m. lunch goes began arriving, and by noon the Moose Preserve Bar & Grill in Bloomfield Township was jammed.

"We're usually full by a quarter to 12," said general manager Lisa Griffin O'Shea of West Bloomfield. "You see all ages — young professionals, the more established, people dressed casually."

The crowd filled the two dining rooms and bars, which seat 210 altogether. There were even customers at several of the many tables on the big outdoor deck in back, despite a temperature in the 60s. The deck heaters helped. "This is the first year we've had deck heaters," O'Shea said.

Celebrating its fifth anniversary this week, the Moose Preserve has been a phenomenal success ever since it first opened. "We're going into our sixth year with record sales," she said.

Through Oct. 1, customers are being invited to enjoy a free sample of its freshly baked chocolate chip cookies and a free cup of apple cider. During the celebration week, customers receive 50 cents off all bar items. Set a mood.

The Moose Preserve has a lot going for it. With its north woods decor and menu highlighting wild game at moderate prices, the restaurant provides a setting for casual meals and fun. It's open for lunch, dinner, drinks and snacks till the late hours, seven days a week.

One dining room has a fireplace, and logs are already burning. There's also a big-screen television in each dining area, as well as three smaller ones, with televised sports events. Customers can play pool in one room, darts in another.

"Traditionally, wild game has only been served in fine restaurants at very expensive prices," said O'Shea, who is proud of the reasonably priced game specialties at the Moose Preserve. Most popular is the Road Kill Grill



Full house: Lunch crowd sits around huge bar in one of two dining areas filled to capacity on recent afternoon at the Moose Preserve Bar & Grill in Bloomfield Township.

(roast venison, semi-boneless broiled quail and wild boar sausage with Michigan mushroom sauce, buttered corn and wild rice casserole, at \$13.95). The diner gets a free "I Eat My Road Kill" bumper sticker.

Fresh pasties — the meat and vegetable pie that is the pride of Michigan's Upper Peninsula — are made from pheasant, venison, buffalo, elk and wild turkey. There's a different choice each day, served with gravy on the side (and with ketchup available). ("The way they eat them in the U.P.," O'Shea said.)

Just about everything served is made fresh, she declared, including a soup of the day and the Moose Preserve's signature barley soup — either beef or buffalo barley — served every day. A

top seller is the venison chili served with sour cream and green onions. "That's a big favorite with a lot of the (Detroit) Lions players that come in," she said.

Each day there are up to four fish specialties, prepared in not-unusual ways. Campfire Whitefish (\$8.95) is another signature dish, served daily. A whitefish fillet is grilled in foil with herb-mayonnaise, lemon, peppers and sweet onions. "Some people order it every time they come in," she said.

One of the customers dining on Campfire Whitefish at lunch was Bonnie Heideman of Bloomfield Hills, who was seated at a long table with a group of 20 co-workers from EDS in Troy and Pontiac.

"It's wonderful," she said of the

whitefish. "It has a unique flavor as opposed to just a broiled fish. It's a complete meal. It comes with (redskin) potatoes and bread."

Heideman said she comes to the Moose Preserve all the time and that the restaurant is where EDS workers often celebrate people's promotions.

"It's a good, popular place," said Bob Nicholls, an account executive on the Pontiac account at D'Arcy MacManus in Bloomfield Hills. He was seated at a nearby table with four clients from Pontiac and was enjoying a club sandwich.

"With this theme, it seems to really draw people. The food is good and reasonable. We entertain a lot of clients here," he said.

The Moose Preserve Bar and Grill

• **WHERE:** 2395 N. Woodward Ave., just north of Square Lake Road, Bloomfield Township, (810) 85-TROUT

• **HOURS:** Opens at 11 a.m. Monday-Saturday. Opens at noon Sunday except for Detroit Lions home games when it opens at 11 a.m. Open until midnight Sunday-Monday; until 1 a.m. Tuesday; until 2 a.m. Wednesday-Saturday.

• **MENU:** Specializes in wild game. Pasties made daily. Homemade soups, appetizers including venison chili. Fish specials, barbecue ribs, nachos, burgers including buffalo burgers, salads, sandwiches, desserts. Full-service bar with 12 draft beers, plus bottled beer, wine, liquor.

• **VEGETARIAN FRIENDLY?** Yes. Have eggplant and mozzarella grill cheese sandwich; fettuccini Alfredo, fish items.

• **HIGHLIGHTS:** (Up north, hunting lodge motif with decorative accents such as moose and deer heads on wall, wooden Indian statue in foyer. Casual atmosphere. Pool tables, dart boards, big-screen TVs.

• **COST (RANGE):** Moderate, with entrees priced \$6-\$15.

• **RESERVATION:** A limited number are taken.

• **CREDIT CARDS:** Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diner's Club

RESTAURANT SPECIALS

Send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wygonik, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 38251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or by fax (313)551-7279.

Special events

America

Series of regional feasts featuring a different part of the United States in a prix fixe three-course meal. Cost \$25 per person, excluding tax and gratuity, Oct.

2. Hawaiian. Call for reservations. (810) 549-2000
Michigan Fall Fest

Savor the flavors of fall, prix fixe dinner, \$38.95 per person, not including tax and gratuity. Feasts begin 7 p.m. It will be offered Thursday, Sept. 28 at Morelia, (810) 642-3084; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 29-30 at Sebastian's Grill, (810) 649-0225. Reservations required. Golden Mushroom

*The Food and Wine of Tuscany and

Beyond Chianti," Monday, Oct. 2. Call for reservations and information. (810) 559-4230

Alexander the Great
Movie & dinner package, \$24.95... Includes dinner and movie for two, 34733 Warren, Westland, (313) 320-5410

Just opened

Ganglia Khan Mongolian Restaurant
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37540 Six Mile Road, Livonia, Laurel Park.
Hours 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sundays. (313) 432-0990 or (313) 432-9997

Bruegger's Fresh Bagel Bakery
Quality Dining, Inc. has opened its 10th Bruegger's Fresh Bagel Bakery. The restaurant is at 1398 Walton Boulevard, Rochester Hills, the second in

Rochester Hills. Bruegger's offers flavored cream cheeses, premium coffees, bagels and bagel-based sandwiches.

Benefit

Too Chee

A select group of the country's finest chefs will cook together at the Wine family-owned Too Chee Restaurant in Novi 6:10 p.m. Monday, Oct. 9 for the benefit of the Mike Utley Foundation. Tickets \$150 per person. (810) 348-5555 or (810) 348-0209

Trini & Carmen's Restaurant
Annette Diggs benefits 11 a.m. to midnight, Saturday, Sept. 30 at Trini & Carmen's Restaurant in Clawson (Maple Road, just east of Crooks). Tickets are \$20 per person, includes dinner, beer, wine and dancing. The benefit will help raise money for Annette Diggs and her family, as well as try and find a possible

bone marrow match for her. The blood test for bone marrow match will be 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 8 at the Waterford C.A.I. Hall. Call for reservations and information. (810) 280-2020

College restaurants

American Harvest Restaurant (Schoolcraft) International Dinner Buffet 6-7:45 p.m. Wednesdays at American Harvest Restaurant on campus, 18600 Haggerty Road. Cost \$15.95-\$19.95 per person. Reservations recommended. Oct. 4, Italian; Oct. 11, French. The restaurant is open for lunch noon to 1 p.m. Tuesday-Friday. The Culinary Arts Department prepares a Gourmet Breakfast Buffet 7:30-9 a.m. Thursdays through Dec. 14. The cost is \$3.75 per person. Reservations are not necessary. (313) 462-4488

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