

DINING

Little Daddy's now open on Woodward in Royal Oak

BY ELEANOR HEALD
SPECIAL WRITER

Late last year, commuters along the Woodward Avenue corridor saw the signature Little Daddy's blue awnings in place at the former Oakland Grill location in Royal Oak. Questions abounded about a scheduled opening. It happened without much fanfare on March 2. But on only its fourth day, it was packed with a lively lunch bunch.

Some say this Woodward location south of 14 Mile Road is fixed. You can almost believe it if you count the number of eaters that have opened and closed there during the last 10 years.

Scheduled to open Dec. 28, the Little Daddy's location suffered major damage when a water pipe broke on Christmas night and was not discovered for over a day. Jinxed? Not in the minds of Tommy Peristeris, Rick Rogow and Stuart Wish, the principal partners in this latest Little Daddy's.

Wish, a partner in the former Oakland Grill, admits business never rose to expectations during its 18-month operation. "It was simply the wrong venue for this site," he said. Yet, you will notice that the decor, while scaled down and brightened up, carries a number of the former trappings including blue and yellow urns at the entrance, the funky banana, same flooring, kitchen and bar (although bar tables are a lot more comfortable).

Partner Rogow noted, "We'll be successful here because we will have people in and out particularly at lunch, in 30 minutes or less if that's what they want. We've been successful every where we've opened in the metro area."

Brains behind the Big and Little Daddy's eateries is Greek-born Jimmy Peristeris who came to the area in 1971 at age 21. In 1976, he opened his first restaurant, Old Parthenon in Detroit's Greektown. There, in the late 1980s, he inaugurated both the New Parthenon and Mykonos. In 1993, he partnered with Rogow, Jimmy Zazadinos and Red Wing Darren McCarty to open Big Daddy's Parthenon in

Little Daddy's Parthenon & Coney Island

Where: 32832 Woodward Ave., Royal Oak (248) 554-8600.
Hours: Monday-Thursday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday until midnight, and Sunday until 10 p.m.
Menu: Famed menu from other Little Daddy's locations, plus seafood, steaks, chops and BBQ items from the Big Daddy's menu.
Cost: Average \$2-\$10.
Reservations: For groups of eight or more.
Credit cards: All majors accepted.
Other locations:
■ Big Daddy's Parthenon, 6199 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield (248) 737-8500.
■ Little Daddy's Parthenon & Coney Island 22250 Eureka Road, Taylor (734) 287-8600.
■ Little Daddy's Parthenon & Coney Island 39646 Northwestern Highway, Southfield (248) 358-1700

West Bloomfield. The first Little Daddy's on Northwestern Highway opened in 1997.

But since then, inaugurations have been on a fast track with three more locations slated to open soon at 1600 N. Woodward, Bloomfield, 6407 Crooks Road, Troy, and on South Main Street, Royal Oak, in the location of the former Cedar Market. "The right locations have become available and we think now is the time to expand," Peristeris added.

Spanning the concept of Greek food from Coney Islands and Gyros to Greek Specialties, the new Little Daddy's incorporates some of the more popular categories in today's modern dining such as vegetarian, pasta, steaks, chops, seafood and BBQ feasts. All entree-style dishes come with oven-baked fresh bread and butter and steaks and chops have, in addition, rice and a vegetable. These are moderately priced: four broiled lamb chops or a 14-ounce cut Porterhouse Steak are \$19; a 14-ounce New York Strip Steak is \$18.

In addition to quick lunch service, Little Daddy's uses the Ford Motor Company motto of "Quality is Job One" with fresh ingredients, all dishes cooked to order, an amazing array from conys to filets and desserts including about 150 rice puddings served daily.

If you've not been to either Big Daddy's or one of the Little Daddy's and want to taste the most popular items on the menu. Consider that at other locations, the top appetizers are the Flam-

ing Saganski, served tableside with the traditional "Oopah," and Scordalia with beets.

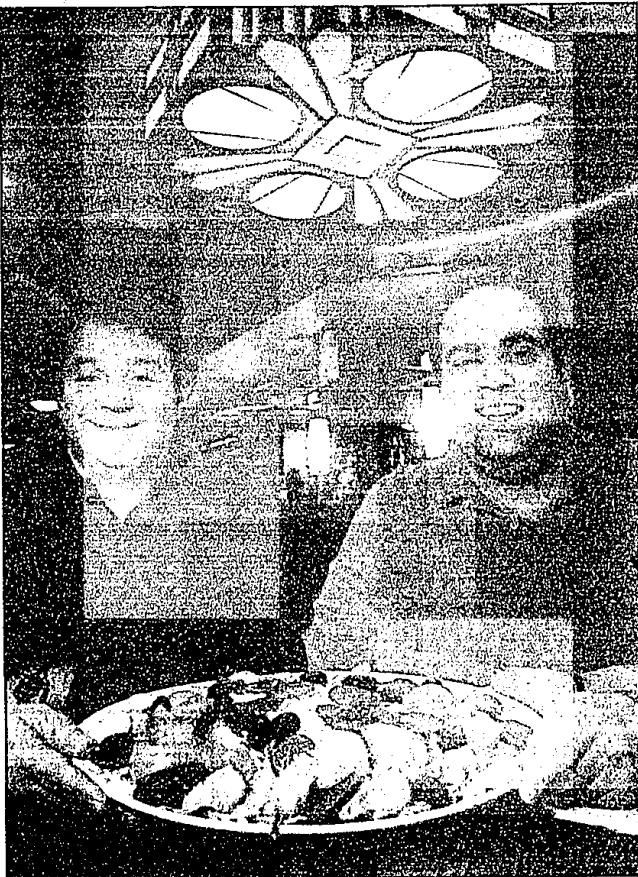
McCart's Coney Special (two conys, fries and a soft drink for \$6) tops this category. Argyle-mono leads the soup category. Tommy's (that's Peristeris) Salad beats a total of eight. Tommy's Special Sandwich with chicken breast, grilled onion and peppers with Swiss cheese on pita bread scores at the top. All sandwiches can be made deluxe for 95 cents that adds French fries or a cup of soup.

Among Greek Specialties, Spinach Cheese Pie, Pastitsio (ground beef, macaroni, feta cheese, special seasonings and bechamel sauce) and Moussaka are in a dead heat.

A Kid's Only menu zeros in on children under 10 years old. Kids of all ages like the broiled Chicken Meatballs and their distinctive, mildly spicy flavor.

Royal Oak on Woodward is the only Little Daddy's location, which like "Big Daddy's Parthenon" has a full liquor license. Greek wines are available by the glass (\$5-\$7) or by the bottle \$21-\$30. A broad selection of California, French and Italian wines range \$19-\$30 and if you're really in the mood to celebrate, Dom Perignon champagne is available at \$135 per bottle.

Why not? Comfortable and unpretentious are desired atmospheres among frequent diners. But they want serious food and good beverage selections. Jimmy Peristeris and his partners are out to give you what you want.



Partners: Tommy Peristeris (left) and Rick Rogow present their award-winning Tommy Salad.

Epoch Enterprises restaurants maintain ownership

BY ELEANOR HEALD
SPECIAL WRITER

Epoch Enterprises owns high-profile Tribute restaurant in Farmington Hills, also Too Chez in Novi and Forte in Birmingham. Negotiations related to sale of Larry Wieso's Progressive Tool and Industries automotive-

allied company fueled speculations about the Wieso family's other business, Epoch Enterprises.

In the March 31, Wine Spectator now in its 31st year, Wine Spectator and Executive Chef Takashi Yagihashi become the first Detroit metro-area restaurant to receive expansive three-page coverage in

this widely read wine and lifestyle periodical. Forte's executive chef Tim Voss is being touted in restaurant and lifestyle magazine circles as a rising star. Too Chez restaurant's Greg Upshur has received recognition by Food Arts and Nation's Restaurant News, a weekly trade publication for the restaurant

and food industry. Epoch's restaurants are now being represented by a Santa Monica-Beverly Hills public relations/advertising agency and this added to the rumor mill. Does such publicity enhance the sale of Tribute and its sister eateries? While Epoch president Toni Wieso remained unavailable for

comment, Tribute's Maitre d' Mickey Bakst was willing to squelch rumors.

"I say this with the utmost certainty," he said. "Epoch is a complete and separate entity from Progressive Tool."

"Epoch is opening Latitude, it's new Up North restaurant in the Bay Harbor complex. A chef is in

the process of being hired. Epoch is also aggressively involved in the Lion's stadium project in Detroit."

Tribute is like the Wieso family's baby. All the restaurants are an important part of the family's business ventures. The Wiesos are not selling any of their restaurants at this time."

WHAT'S COOKING

HAWAIIAN DINNER

Point Creek Cider Mill & Restaurant, 4480 Orion Road, Rochester is hosting a Hawaiian dinner 7 p.m. Monday, March 22. The cost is \$45 per person for the food package or \$60 per person for food and wine package. For information, or reservations, call (248) 651-8381.

VEGETARIAN FEAST

A fun celebration of savory and creative combinations hosted by Unique Restaurant Corp., Wednesday, March 24 at Morel's A-Michigan Bistro, 30100 Telegraph, Bingham Farms, (248) 642-1094; Thursday, March 25 at Northern Lakes Seafood Company, 1475 Woodward Ave., Bloom-

field Hills, (248) 646-7900, and Friday, March 26 at No. VI Chop-house and Lobster Bar, 27780 Novi Road, (248) 305-5210. Each feast begins 7 p.m. Cost \$34.50 per person. Call for reservations.

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