

Sweet Lorraine's takes on stunning new look

BY ELEANOR HEALD
SPECIAL WRITER

Sweet Lorraine's Café in Southfield completed a face-lift this month.

"Passersby are doing more than passing. They're saying, 'Wow' to this inviting exterior beckoning them inside to try the innovative cuisine of Lorraine Platman, a staple since the doors first opened in 1984.

Platman and her business partner, husband Gary Sussman, are sole owners of the mini empire that began with her first specialty, desserts, and the opening of the Madison Heights Sweet Lorraine's Deli & Café in 1982.

The dessert concept provided the name Sweet Lorraine's. An Ann Arbor location was opened in 1993 and the new century anticipates a mid-April opening of a breakfast, lunch and dinner café in the Livonia Marriott.

Southfield's Sweet Lorraine's ultra-modern new look is the creation of Edward Shinn of Identity & Architectural Services "ID&AS" in Redford.

Window artwork is an ode to the deep bond between Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, giants of the modern art movement. Each paid homage of sorts to the other.

One did "The Dance" and "Seated Woman," then the other translated it into his own. This dance plays out on the front and side of both corners. The eclectic details echo the feel and taste inside the café.

That feel, although now eight years old and scheduled for a minor makeover later this year,

Sweet Lorraine's Café

Where: 29101 Greenfield (north of 12 Mile Road) in Southfield
Open: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday; 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sunday
Menus: World-beat cuisine with emphasis on fresh, seasonal ingredients from local purveyors

Cost: Lunch \$6-12; Dinner \$7-19

Reservations: Only for parties of six or more, (248) 559-5985

Credit cards: All majors

You should also know: Jazz Night 8:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesday. The 1999 Zagat Guide rated Sweet Lorraine's one of Michigan's Top 10 restaurants; the restaurant also received the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence

Other locations

■ **Sweet Lorraine's Deli & Café** - 1451 14 Mile Road, Madison Heights. Open for lunch only, (248) 585-0627

■ **Sweet Lorraine's Café** - 303 Detroit Street, Ann Arbor, (734) 665-0700

■ **Sweet Lorraine's Café** - Marriott Hotel, 17100 N. Laurel Park Drive, Livonia. Scheduled to open in mid-April for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Sweet Lorraine's Uncorked

Gary Sussman, business partner and husband of Lorraine Platman, has constructed an interesting wine list. He recommends:

■ Wild Mushroom and Chevre Pizza with 1998 Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc

■ Pecan Chicken with 1997 Chalk Hill Chardonnay

■ "French Onion" Steak Tenderloin with 1997 Kathryn Kennedy Lateral (a California red Meritage wine)

is upbeat and urban chic in Mediterranean yellow with dashes of deep blue and green, warmed by clothless wooden tables and colorful tableware.

French-style posters serve as stylish wall art. Planned interior remodeling will add a cozy bar and lounge area to this already comfortable bi-level eatery.

The self-trained Platman maintains she honed her skills "in an apartment at Six Mile and Woodward." She credits her art background and management of

an art gallery as aiding her in viewing food as an art expression.

A diner easily picks up on contemporary approaches and twists on classics.

Meditation has no meat. It's soy protein served with sundried tomato sauce, roasted garlic mashed potatoes and broccoli.

Cesar Salad made without eggs is topped with crispy fried clams. Flavors and texture are extraordinary.

Lunch and dinner menus have

common threads, but as might be expected, there's an expanded offering of deli-style sandwiches and burgers at lunch, along with a broad variety of lunch-size salads among the main courses.

Brie Portabella Melt is one sandwich that is also a dinner-time favorite.

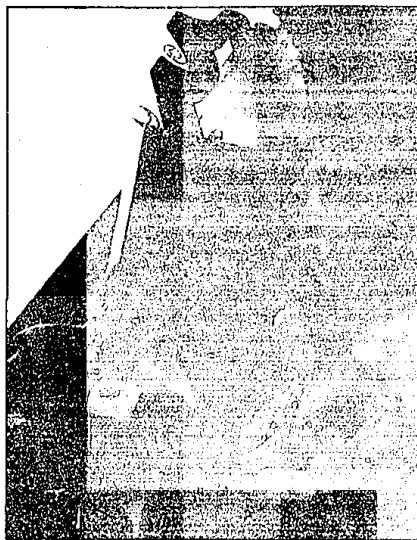
At dinner, most popular "Starters" are Classic Quesadilla, a cilantro-chili tortilla, Monterey Jack and queso cheddar with sides of tomato-corn salsa, guacamole and sour cream. Wild Mushroom and Chevre Pizza topped with caramelized onions is a close second.

Lorraine's Special Salad with gorgonzola cheese, fresh pears, hazelnuts and dried cranberries is the top "Side." Pecan Chicken, Maple-Cured Atlantic Salmon and French Onion Steak Tenderloin are atop the list of favorite main courses.

Leave room for dessert from a presentation tray. Choose either the Apple Brown Betty or Something Wonderful, a warm triple chocolate brownie with Ray's White Russian ice cream and Kahlu Chocolate Sauce.

Sweet Lorraine's new look serves to illustrate the innate vision and spirit of its owners to offer diners flavorful, globally-inspired cuisine.

Eleanor Heald is a Troy resident who writes about dining, food and wine for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave her a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1864.



Vintage look: Marriage and business partners Gary Sussman and Lorraine Platman toast to the new look of Sweet Lorraine's, which underwent recent indoor and outdoor renovations.

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