TAPAS

FROM PAGE BI

of Spanish life. Consumed before lunch and again before dinner, tapas are rarely a meal replacement. But that a Spain. Americans have begun ordering a number of tapas for a satisfy-ing, casual meal.

SANGRIA

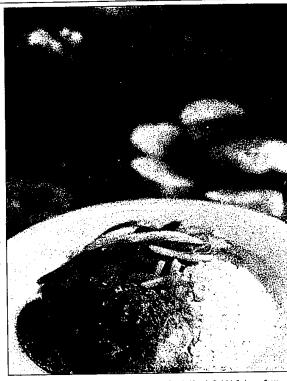
When Sangria opened in Royal Oak in October 1999, it was ahead of the tapas popularity curve. Owner Luigi Cutraro did not rest on early accolades. He made some strategic updates, such as the creation of a 42-seat cafe room, that can be opened to the outdoors in warm weather, and the addition of Flamence dancing, performed by Patricia Argentina from 8:30-9:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

Executive Chef Lee Vulaj, a Culinary Institute of America grad, who has headed Sangria's kitchen from the beginning, has become a local chef celebrity. Each Friday on WDIV-TV at 12:25 p.m. he demonstrates preparation of a Spanish dish that will be served at Sangria as a veckend special. Since the early days, his tapas have become a local chef celebrity. Each Friday on WDIV-TV at 12:25 p.m. he demonstrates preparation of a Spanish dish that will be served at Sangria as a veckend special. Since the early days, his tapas have become nore adventurous and creative. Among cold tapas, there's the truly unique Hummus de Adulbias Negrus, black besorted crackers that brings the hummus concept to mew heights. Aquacate a la Reina is avocado stuffed with chicken, grapes, eclery and onions.

At the evenings on the Meyer's assugate and sweet sans grant as a very satisfying. Chef Lee La Lorgetta Con Salchieda, lobater and sweet sans grant last, will chase away any chills. If you're a ribs lower. Costillac con Pina Colada, pork ribs served with a Pina Colada, burberete sans take the very costillac con Pina Colada, pork ribs served with a Pina Colada.

ribs served with a Pina Colada barbecue sauce take ribs over the top. Gambas al Pil Pil, shrimp sauteded with olive oil, garlie, pancetta, banana pepers and tomatoes is authentically Spanish.

The Detroit Red Wings organization knows that for two years running Sangria has been named as one of the top



Rollitos de Pollo Rellenos, front, with, from left, Langosta Con Sakhicha, Red Sangria, Pastel de Espinacasy Queso, and a bottle of Marques de Caceres.

50 Spanish restaurants in the U.S.
On the night of the 2002 Stanley Cup victory, they held their celebration at Sangria. Were tapas the season-long secret ingredient to victory? Oras it Creme Catalana, the famous Spanish flan for dessert?

ALFGRIAS

"I come to Alegrias for the

authentic Spanish food," said advertising/marketing executive and Southfield resident Will Horvath. "The variety and qual-ity of the tapas are excellent. They are nicely spiced and some have a heavy emphasis on garlic, which is uniquely Spanish. The Spanish waitstaff offers authen-ticity which I also like." Alegrias does not offer the same high-toned ambiance as Sangria, but as Horwath noted,

"In Spain, I've been in many tapas bars with a similar decor, decorated with Spanish tiles and sangria pitchem."

At 8:30 p.m. on Hidy and Saturday, Alegrias comes alive during a 45-minute Flamenco dance performance by Lisa and Mari Montes, daughters of Alegrias' owner Jose Montes. The Montes sisters were taught authentic Flamenco dancing by their grandmother, the well-

TAPAS RESTAURANTS IN METRO-DETROIT

SANGRIA.

401 Lafayette (corner of Fourth Street), Royal Oak (248) 543-1964.

Hours: Lunch —11:30a.m.-4p.m. Tuesday-Friday; Dinner — 5-10 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 5 p.m.-midnight Friday and Saturday, 4-10p.m. Sunday

38123 W. 10 Mile Road (at Grand River in the Holiday Inn) Farmington Hills (248) 478-7780. Hours: 5-10 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 6-9 p.m. Sunday

Cost at both: \$4-9.

known Maria del Carmen, who

known Maria del Carmen, who continues to choreograph the Flamenco and Spanish classical dancing of Maria del Carmen Grupo Espana. They have performed at special Detroit Symphony Orchestra events and the Michigan Opera Theater. Executive Chef Roberto Caceres graduated from culinary school in Barcelona. Before coming to Alegnias, the cooked in Spanish restaurants in Miami, where he perfected not only his topas recipes but Sopa de Frijoles Negros, Cuban-style black bean soup, served with green plantains on the side.

Popular among tapas at Alegnias are Gambas al Ajillo, shrimp sautéed in garlic sauce and Calamars Fritos, marinated deep fried squid, a decidedly different taste than Italian-style calamari fritti. Torilla a la Espanola has no resemblance to a Mexican tortilla. It's the traditional Spanish omelet with eggs, potato and onion. Spanish omelet with eggs,

Spanish omelet with eggs, potato and onion. Queso de Cabra Gratinado, goat cheese au gratin with fresh grilled tomates, is a sizzling delight as are the Caracoles Provensal, escargot in garlie butter. Salteadillo de Res, tender bed stirjes, mushrooms and caramelized onions in Rioja wine sauce, can be accompanied by any of the Spanish red wines on the list. Currently, Spaln is one of the hottest European travel destinations. If you can't make it to Madrid and the Calle de la Cava Baja, famed for its tapes bars,

Baja, famed for its tapas bars,

beat to the Spanish pulse at either Sangria or Alegrias. Going for tapas with a group, as is the Spanish custom, is great fun.

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

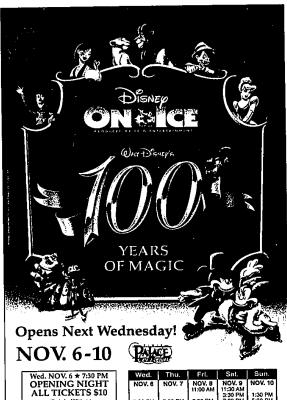
CITY BITES

Jeepers

A kids eating out treat is as close as Jeepers, 4240 Baldwin Road, Auburn Hills (248)972-

Hours: 11a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Saturday and 11 a.m. 8 p.m. Sunday.
For kids 2 - to 12-years-old, Jegers has the rides and excitement of an outdoor amusement park and indoor convenience rain or shine.
From snacks such as pop-corn, cotton candy and pretzels to hot dogs, salad, French fites and nachos that cost \$3-5, to a freshly-baked 12-piece pizza at \$21-4, these parent-pleasing prices offer a special weekend or family night out treat. It's also an ideal spot for kids' birthday parties with no at home mess.



Buy tickets at www.disneyonice.com ticketmaster Ticket Centers including The Palace Locker Room stores,

Marshall Field's, Arena Box Office or call (248) 645-6666 For information call (248) 377-0100 • Groups (248) 371-2055

TICKET PRICES: \$45.00 vip - \$35.00 vip - \$25.00 - \$18.50 - \$15.00 (Service charges and handling fees may apply: on service charge at Arena Box Office.)

