

Good food, more for restaurant success

By ETHEL SIMMONS

The secrets of running a successful restaurant are revealed by Raoul de Morcia, manager of the Troy Hilton's gourmet dining spot, The Haymarket.

As you may have surmised, it takes more than good food, although you've got to have that.

De Morcia points out, "If I serve you sloppily, the meal won't taste half as good."

Exuding Gallic charm, he declares, "The first thing you've got to have is waiters that realize you want service, food, above all, friendliness and welcome. You want to be the king and queen."

DESCRIBING service, he says, "It should be as rapid or slow as you wish." What diner hasn't been rushed through a meal, or lulled into a stupor when service lags?

Getting to the food itself, de Morcia explains, "It has to be well presented, good and warm, cooked correctly. It's a continuous job to keep all things well coordinated."

De Morcia has worked in the best of places, managing Carl's Chop House and the London Chop House in Detroit, before coming to The Haymarket shortly after its opening.

The restaurant business was an avocation that became a vocation. De Morcia, who was born in France, was educated at the Sorbonne and received a Ph. D. in philosophy in 1939.

HE WAS GOING to be a career officer.

"Philosophy was not a subject that prepared me for war," he states. In 1940, de Morcia joined the Free French Forces with DeGalle. He helped get out American fliers, hidden in French homes.

"The courage of those people was phenomenal," he recalls. "They were subject to being shot for harboring an Allied Soldier."

"On a mission, I would never sleep the same place twice. It was a death sentence for them, too. I was scared many times, but I came out alive."

OPTIMISTIC despite his past, de Morcia says, "If you don't hate or get angry but let the enemy do so, he knows his power of thinking, and you'll get the better of him."

Twenty-three members of his family were arrested during World War II. Two cousins escaped.

"They told the children after 38 years," he says, "I am their only living relative."

After the war, de Morcia came to California. In sales and public relations work, he introduced a French lipstick, Guitart, the first indestructible ("Rain and Don't Tell"), which sold one and a half million tubes in eight months.

After the business was bought out by Americans, de Morcia became a business analyst. When he grew tired of traveling, he "decided to take a position as manager in a restaurant."

WITH HIS people-oriented approach, de Morcia offers another maxim on service:

"I have trained the waiter to always take care of a single person. He is usually a traveler, lonely, and doesn't want to be shoved in the back of the restaurant."

De Morcia's own palate early on told him when a restaurant had served the wrong wine.

He notes, "Here we have one of the best selections."

But he doesn't scoff at Americans' taste. In fact, he compliments them.

ACCORDING TO de Morcia, "Some American restaurants think Americans don't know food, but he (the diner) demands a refined dish."

De Morcia believes this is due to the extensive traveling of our decade.

"Twenty years ago, who would eat escargot?" Twenty years ago, the average restaurant had no wines. They want wines, and they know value.



...on restaurants, on wartime, on people

(Staff Photos by Barbara McClellan)

Haymarket Restaurant manager Raoul de Morcia gives his views...

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