

Getting Around

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Olde World cafe has charm

The Olde World, which calls itself "a pleasant cafe," is West Bloomfield's newest restaurant. I passed a pleasant afternoon there, talking to manager Giovanni (Jack) Leone and trying a sampler of specialties.

The cafe, with informal European decor and two dining rooms, is at 4305 Orchard Lake Road at Lone Pine Road in the Pine Lake Mall. Leone is one of the three owners, who also have two restaurants in East Lansing they opened as students.

All three restaurants use the same 6,000 square foot kitchen for controlled food preparation and meat purchasing.

According to Leone, most restaurants fall in the category of fast foods or full service.

"There are not too many with a nice atmosphere and good quality food, although a limited menu."

THIS is the charm of the Olde World cafes.

"Any nice can go and relax, listen to entertainment, have beer or wine. You

don't have to come dressed up, or make a reservation. It's a place they can enjoy," he said.

Leone likes to think of his restaurants as a real part of the community. In East Lansing, customers may be housewife or employee and student at the Michigan State University campus.

In West Bloomfield, he sees the Olde World as "an extension of a subdivision. An entity to itself."

The luncheon trade here, Leone finds, is mostly women. In contrast to the East Lansing restaurants, this cafe is doing a good dinner business. But he is still trying to build a local audience for the nightly folk entertainment, part of the Olde World concept.

Popular folk singer Dean Rutledge was featured as one of the entertainers at the time of the recent grand opening. Leone books the performers for the entertainment which begins each night at 9 p.m. "There is no cover charge. On Sundays, from 2 to 5 p.m., auditions are presented."

If you take a good look, you might discover the Olde World is a cafeteria in disguise. But Leone hates that word, "cafeteria." He prefers to call it the "service counter."

"We will wait on people at the table," he points out. "But we do ask them to go through the line once and get involved with the food. They may start out thinking they want a corned beef sandwich and wind up with our special sandwich."

The service counter is a lively place, with a staff of 10, on a normal shift, waiting to serve you. They wear red, white and blue striped shirts and leather aprons.

"We're basically a sandwich operation, with wines by the bottle," Leone said.

Going down the line is "kind of like a performance." You see the soup served up, meat sliced for sandwiches, wine poured from red from the tap. It can be a turn-on right through to choosing your cheese cake.

LEONE SAID in East Lansing the Olde World cafes became known for their soups. In West Bloomfield the house soup is clam chowder, but it may change anytime.

Leone created all the soup recipes, including chunky, tasty clam chowder. I sampled.

An MSU graduate, Leone has worked for Machus and for three years at Oakland Hills Country Club. He lives in Bloomfield Hills, where he went to high school at Cranbrook. His hobby is cooking.

With some sandwiches priced at \$3, soup at 75 cents, Leone admits the Olde World is "not the most expensive place around." But he notes you can put together any meal combination you like.

There is hot mulled wine—delicious—at 96 cents. "We sell a lot of that in East Lansing," he said. You can order fresh sauteed mushrooms ("We serve 200 pounds a week.") There are selections from the cheese board.

A menu is available, without prices, and prices are posted on the wall.

"We're in the sliced meat business," Leone explained. "Prices fluctuate. Two years ago ham was 75 cents a pound. Now it's \$2.35."

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