

LET'S GO! DINING

Ernesto's offers feast for eyes, palate

By VICTORIA DIAZ
Special Writer

Festive at any time of the year, Ernesto's Country Inn in Plymouth takes on a special glow as chef Ernie DeMichele and his culinary crew get ready to launch the holidays with a special Thanksgiving Day Buffet, to be served noon to 7 p.m.

The menu will spotlight the classic roast turkey and trimmings dinner. But for those who might like to venture off in a slightly different direction, Ernesto's will offer a cornucopia of less traditional fare, too. If you're in the mood for honey-glazed baked ham, roast pork loin or any number of fresh seafood dishes, just say the word.

On the other hand, if you feel like antipasto, pasta, pesto or other Italian goodies, DeMichele — a popular chef in the Detroit area for more than 60 years — will be happy to oblige.

He and right-hand man Rick DeSmet plan to offer a dessert table of pies, cobblers, puddings and Italian sweets to top off the meal.

Adults can dine for \$15.95, kids (6-12) for \$8.95. For customers 5 and under, dinner is complimentary.

After some major renovations, Ernesto's opened in 1989, under the ownership of Salvatore Messina, with DeMichele as "maestro chef."

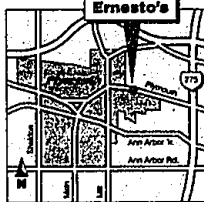
The renovations included enlargement of the bar, an addition and redecoration of some private dining rooms, and an extensive remodeling of the lower-level dining room, and an extensive remodeling of the lower-level dining room, and an extensive remodeling of the lower-level dining room.

Seating capacity, in 10 rooms on three levels, is now approximately 700. This number increases a bit in warm weather when an outdoor deck is opened for dining alfresco.

With its colorful, jewel-toned interior, fireplaces throughout, vintage clocks, antiques, and Italianate wall hangings (selected personally by Messina on trips to Europe), Ernesto's provides a feast for the eye as well as the palate — and it's bold, apricot-and-sea-green exterior makes it easy-to-find too.

The food holds center stage here, though, along with service that reflects DeMichele's philosophy about the importance of the customer who visits Ernesto's at any time of the year.

Always family-friendly (smiling, DeMichele calls kids "our future customers"), Ernesto's also welcomes diners who follow special diets. At \$11.45, Melanzana Parmigiana (breaded eggplant with vegetables and cheese) is a favorite with vegetarians, for instance. Ditto for the most-requested dish on the extensive menu — penne pasta with fresh tomatoes, virgin olive oil, basil,



Ernesto's
41061 Plymouth Road, Plymouth
(313) 453-2002
Mileage Classic Italian
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Chest Pizzas and more specials \$2.95 - \$21.95
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Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday noon to 9 p.m. (opens during closed Mon. - Sat. 3 to 6 p.m.)

and Italian spices, priced at \$9.95. A number of other vegetarian dishes are available (specials are offered each day), and the kitchen is always open to suggestions.

Frequent visitor Kathy Leo of Northville says she finds the kitchen always does an especially fine job with pasta dishes.

"For me, that's a cornerstone with Italian restaurants," she emphasizes. "And I love the appetizer list. I think I've tried them all. The roasted pepper salad is a favorite of mine."

Send recommendations of restaurants to feature in Let's Go! by Kelly Wygonik, editor, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.



BILL DRISLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

At your service: Chef Ernie DeMichele (left) serves restaurant general manager Mike Peterson.

Specials

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Thanksgiving dinners

UNIQUE RESTAURANT CORPORATION
Thanksgiving dinners for pick-up offered at Morris and Sebastian's 628 on West Nov. 23. Cost: \$16.95 per person, minimum 10 people.
(810) 542-1054

MEMORIALS
Traditional Thanksgiving meal served 1-8 p.m., \$12.95 per person, at the restaurant in Southfield.
(810) 358-1310

BIG FISH TOO
Turkey dinners \$12.95 in addition to the regular menu, noon to 9 p.m. (810) 365-9533

CHARLEY'S CLEAR TROY
Family-style turkey carved at table, served with fixins, noon to 8 p.m. Cost: \$15.50 per person, children 12 and under \$5.
(810) 329-2261

Brunch features Russian musicians

PREVIEW

The gentle plucking of balalaika strings, the songs of lusty folk tunes and hearty peasant rhythms will fill the air at the Gem Theatre when the Lyric Chamber Ensemble opens its brunch concert series 10:45 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 6 with "Russian Cabaret." Tickets are \$22 and \$20 and includes light brunch, with discounts available for senior citizens and students. Call (810) 357-1111.

The concert features three outstanding artists who recently immigrated from the former Soviet Union — mezzo soprano Irina Mishura-Lethman, balalaika artist Gennadi Zut, and pianist Sasha Dumhatsin of Farmington.

They will perform Russian popular folk tunes, the theme from the Russian film, "The Detective," and of course, "Dark Eyes." Brunch with Bach at the Detroit Institute of Arts features the Verdah Trio 11 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 13. Performances 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 adult, \$10 child, \$5 stairway without food service. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Call (313) 933-2323.

Pianist Scott Holden will perform at Brunch with the Classics, 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 6 at the Somerset Collection in Troy. Brunch is by Sebastian's, and reservations are required. Call (810) 643-7440 after 10 a.m.

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Saturday, November 5
9:00am - 9:00pm
Sunday, November 6
9:00am - 4:00pm

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KIDS (6yrs. - 14yrs.) \$2.00
KIDS (under 6yrs.) FREE

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