

DINING



Smokin' Idea: Mike Nash and his partners decided to change Mr. B's on Orchard Lake Road to a Memphis Smoke barbecue restaurant to attract more clientele.

Restaurant smokin' with the blues

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

When business started to wane at Mr. B's restaurant in West Bloomfield, its principal owners knew exactly what to do to boost sales.

They decided to try to replicate the success of their Memphis Smoke restaurant in Royal Oak.

"With the competition in the area, we just weren't pleased with the performance of the restaurant," said Rob Jackier, one of the principal owners.

"We had always done pretty well, but we feel that we've had a winner with the Memphis Smoke concept. It's been fabulously popular in Royal Oak. We decided there's nothing like this concept in Michigan that we know of - the Southern-style barbecue combined with the blues music. We decided that this neighborhood would be right for that."

The group closed Mr. B's in mid-August and turned it into a Memphis Smoke in about three weeks, general manager Gary Mrochinski said, and officially opened Oct. 7. The interior white brick walls were painted to look as if they were sandblasted. Pictures and paintings of traditional blues artists like Jimmy Rushing, B.B. King, Albert King and Muddy Waters line the walls. A stage, offering entertainment Wednesday through Sundays, is centrally located in the restaurant with televisions in nearly every corner.

Corporate chefs Dan Schuler, Randy Banish, and Dan

Memphis Smoke

Where: 6400 Orchard Lake Road (at the northwest corner of Orchard Lake and Maple roads), West Bloomfield.

Hours: 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Fridays, noon to 2 a.m. Saturdays, and noon to midnight Sundays. The kitchen is open until 12:30 a.m. during the week, and 1:15 p.m. weekends.

Credit: Visa, Mastercard and American Express are accepted.

Information: (810) 855-3110.

There is also a location in Royal Oak at 100 S. Main St. Call (810) 543-0917 for more information about that restaurant.

Lauvery, created the menu for the new Memphis Smoke. Lauvery, formerly of Finbhone's restaurant, is also the chef of the restaurant.

Like the Royal Oak location, Memphis-style "dry rub" ribs (\$8.49-\$10.99) are the restaurant's signature items.

"Sometimes it's a little confusing in this neighborhood when you ask them if you want them (ribs) wet or dry," Jackier explained.

"Wet ribs are your traditional ribs with barbecue sauce. Sometimes people think that

"dry" ribs are dry - they have nothing. We baste the ribs on the charcoal with a special basting sauce. They're smoked for 2 1/2 hours and then we put the dry-rub powder on it and it gives just an incredibly unique taste."

The menu offers a variety of barbecue items from beef brisket (\$8.49) and pulled pork smoked for more than 14 hours (\$8.49) to barbecue salad with beef, pork or turkey (\$8.49). A catfish dinner (\$8.49), blackened turkey medallions served over Creole tomato sauce (\$8.99), Memphis jambalaya (\$8.49), an array of sandwiches (\$8.49-\$9.99), and salads (\$2.99-\$7.99) are other examples of Memphis Smoke fare.

Children get a choice of three items - chicken fingers, a hot dog or spaghetti - priced at \$3.99.

There are subtle differences between the Royal Oak and West Bloomfield locations, Mrochinski and Jackier said.

"At this store (West Bloomfield), we're offering fresh fish specials every day, some with pasta and some without. The Royal Oak store does that occasionally. Both stores offer smoked prime ribs on the weekends Fridays through Sundays," Jackier said.

Each Memphis Smoke has its own personality too, according to Mrochinski, who came to Memphis Smoke from Mr. B's Roadhouse in Clarkston.

"We've got such a wide group of people in here. We've got everything from 16-year-olds on their first date to somebody cele-

brating their 60th anniversary. It's a step apart from Royal Oak where here it's more relaxed. You're more comfortable or at home here. Here it gives people the opportunity to be themselves," Mrochinski said.

Jackier, a Rochester Hills resident, offered a variation on that explanation.

"Royal Oak being Royal Oak there's tons of foot traffic. Many of the patrons who come to Royal Oak don't come specifically to go to one restaurant or one bar. They come to be in Royal Oak. They'll go to Memphis Smoke, and Mr. B's Pub, Fifth Avenue (billiard hall), and they'll go to Woody's. They'll just cruise around. This location, because there's no sidewalks, is what we call a destination location. Most people plan on coming in."

Jackier, along with Mike Nash, Marty Tuchman and Ralph Gustafson, Mr. B's own nine Mr. B's, two Memphis Smoke, two Monterey Cantina restaurants and the South Lyon Hotel, Mr. B's will celebrate its 20th anniversary in June. Jackier said he and his partners are planning on opening a third Memphis Smoke by the end of 1997.

Mrochinski feels that the change from Mr. B's to Memphis Smoke was a good idea for the West Bloomfield building.

"We feel the investment's worth it. The investment's in the people who walk in the front door... Anybody who shows up is going to be definitely pleased."

STREET SCENE

Mudpuppy finds its musical roots in New Orleans



The Detroit blues/funk band Mudpuppy knows when it has found something good. Starting out as a back-up band at the Holly Hotel, Mudpuppy found its niche after lead singer/bassist Paul Randolph made a trip down south.

"I had come to New Orleans for Mardi Gras, and I was so blown away by the whole music culture in that city that I came back and said, 'Man, this is what we need to do,'" said Randolph, a former member of Urban Voodoo Kids.

Everybody agreed that was really the beginning of Mudpuppy. Randolph and his band evolved its sound into a blend of Chicago strut, bayou funk, Memphis soul and St. Louis swing.

"It's always nice when you get that feeling about something, you go for it and it goes over well. We're pretty much sticking to our guns. Certainly we don't try to come off as being from New Orleans, but we definitely listen to the music and we're all influenced by it."

Mudpuppy's sound is showcased on its self-titled debut record, which is available at Sundry Appliance, Photo and Sound in Dearborn, as well as Southern Music. The eight-song release includes three originals - "Lies," "Make Up Your Mind," and "Better Think Twice" - as



Defrosting: Mudpuppy - from left, drummer/vocalist Darryl Pierce, guitarist/vocalist Mark Pasman, lead singer/bassist Paul Randolph, keyboardist/vocalist Ted Pulker, and percussionist/vocalist Lorenzo "Spoons" Brown.

well as covers of "Kansas City," "Too Poor," "Voodoo," "Call The Plumber," and "Spoonful."

Randolph, an Oak Park resident, said that although he's happy about the first CD, he's looking forward to heading back into the studio.

"We're kind of fallen into a certain style of playing and writing within the context of Mudpuppy. Everybody comes from different playing experiences and backgrounds. It's nice to have a full library to reference from. We're all very proud of the first CD, but I think we're all very anxious to start on the second one. The second one is pretty much

gonna nail it on the head; the direction of Mudpuppy."

The band's resume includes stints with Stevie Wonder, Mary Wilson, the avant garde jazz band Greco Galaxy, Robert Penn, Albert Adams, and groups involved with the Parliament-Funkadelic organization.

The album pushed Mudpuppy to the forefront of the Detroit blues scene. They appeared on

the "House of Blues Radio Hour," carried by CIDR-FM 93.9 "The River," hosted by Dan Aykroyd. The band also contributed a cover of "Lovin' Machine" to the Autism Society CD "Blues from the Heart II," which also featured Robert Jones, Lonnie Shields and Steve Nardella.

Mudpuppy - which also includes guitarist/vocalist Mark Pasman of Southfield, percus-

sionist/vocalist Lorenzo "Spoons" Brown of Detroit, keyboardist/vocalist Ted Pulker of Wallied Lake, and drummer/vocalist Darryl Pierce of Westland - will perform Saturday, Jan. 4, as part of the "Anti-Freeze Blues Festival," formerly known as "The Magic Bag's Deep Freeze Blues Festival," Friday, Jan. 3-Sunday, Jan. 5, at the Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Farmdale. The three-day event features food from the Mardi Gras Cafe in Southfield.

Sugar Blue, Willie D. Warren with the Garfield Blues Band, Johnny "Yard Dog" Jones and Bobby East, Wallied Lake, and The Alligators open the festival on Friday, Jan. 3. The following day, Saturday, Jan. 4, Larry McCray and the Bobby Murray Band, The Butler Twins, The Grandmasters with Jeff Grand and Eddie Harsch, and Robert Jones perform. A.C. Reed headlines the closing day of the festival with Big Dave and the Ultrasonics, Johnnie Bassett and The Blues Insurgents, Jocelyn B and Alberta Adams, and The Hasting Street Blues Band.

Tickets are \$15 per day or \$36 for a three-day pass. For more information, call (810) 544-3030.

In case you were curious about who the kidnappers were listening to in the movie "Ransom," that was none other than Smashing Pumpkins' singer Billy Corgan. He joined forces with award-winning composer James Horner to pen the score for the movie.

If you have a question or comment for Christina Fuoco, you can write to her in care of The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36261 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, or you can leave her a message at (313) 953-2047, mailbox No. 2130, or via e-mail at CFuoco@aol.com.

GUN AND KNIFE SHOW

SUPER DEALS ON ARMS!

FRIDAY, JAN. 3-4-5

FRIDAY, JAN. 3-4-5

GREAT SELECTION OF

Handguns • Rifles • Ammo • Shotguns • Knives

Military Surplus • Hunting Supplies • Plus Much More!

Friday is Set-Up Day. Come Early For Your Best Deal!

Not All Dealers Participate On Fridays.

UPCOMING EVENTS: SUNDAY CARD SHOW (JANUARY 12-11-12)

FREE

FRIDAY ADMISSION

TO THE TRADE CENTER

WITH THE SHOW

FRIDAY JAN 3-4-5 ONLY 06

City of Southfield
Cultural Arts Division • Parks & Recreation Department

CONCERTS-IN-THE-GARDEN SERIES

Special Concert!

The Gusé Family

Spectacular!
Dynamic!
Electrifying!

The Gusé Family is a HOT item! World renowned entertainment delivering a fast-paced, high-energy variety show. They include salutes to Al Jolson, Elvis, The Mills Brothers, Eddie Arnold, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline and Harmonious Gospel Singing.

For tickets call
Southfield Centre for the Arts
at (810) 424-9022

DON'T MISS THEM!
Sunday, January 19, 1997
Southfield-Lathrup High School
Show-time 3:00 p.m.

General admission \$9.00
Students and Seniors \$5.00

Seafood Buffet

ALL YOU CAN EAT

Buy One Seafood Buffet Dinner at \$12.95

Get the 2nd Seafood Buffet Dinner at 1/2 OFF

The Hatfield Inn

Farmington Hills
(810) 474-4800

The Hatfield Inn

NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA DASH

Prime Rib Buffet 30/person

Call for info

Farmington Hills
(810) 474-4800

DON PEDRO'S

24366 Grand River

(2 blocks W of Telegraph)

OPEN 7 DAYS 537-1450

<p>Margaritas</p> <p>WED. 4-125</p> <p>HAPPY HOUR 3-6</p>	<p>Kid's Menu</p> <p>Drink Included \$2.99</p> <p>LUNCH SPECIALS \$3.99</p>
--	--

FREE BANQUET ROOM

AVAILABLE FOR PARTIES, SHOWERS, WEDDINGS, ETC.

1/2 OFF DINNER

2nd meal of equal or lesser value 1/2 price.

Also includes Alcoholic beverages.

Dine-In Only With Coupon

Expires 1/15/97

MEXICAN SAMPLER FOR TWO \$10.95

Includes: Beef Fajita, 2 Sides, Chicken Enchilada, 2 Desserts, Soda, Coffee & Tea.

Dine-In Only Coupon Expires 1/15/97

Not valid with any other offer.

T-Bones Steak & Seafood House

3481 Elizabeth Lk. Rd. Waterford • 681-1700

OPEN 7 DAYS • LUNCH & DINNER

DINNER FOR TWO \$24.95

Choose Two:

• 12 Oz. Sirloin Steak	• Ribs 'n' Chicken Combo
• Full Slab Ribs	• Pan Fried Perci

Includes salad or soup, bread or side dish. Taxes & gratuity not included.

WED. LUNCH: Dinner 11:00-2:00, Valid Sun-Thurs.