



**Lotus pasta:** Cafe Venezia owner Tom Timmons takes pride in his establishment's Italian cuisine where the sauce is everything. Cafe Venezia on the southeast corner of Middlebelt and 11 Mile roads was formerly Cafe Oliverio.

## That's Italian

### Cafe Venezia maintains Old World flavor

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Criteria for the quintessential New York-style Italian restaurant varies among connoisseurs.

At Cafe Venezia on Middlebelt and 11 Mile, the checks for authenticity are only exceeded by those red and white ones on the table cloths.

A head waiter grinding pepper at individual tables. Check. Serenading music varying from jazz to Frank Sinatra. Check. Curtains on the windows. Check. A piece of artwork behind the cash register depicting New York's Little Italy. Check.

"I think this is what makes people think of an Italian restaurant," said Owner Tom Timmons, running his finger underneath the word "trattoria" on the menu. "When they see this word, they think of a mom and pop type of place where the mother is in the back rolling up meatballs or rolling dough and the father is out

in the front to greet you."

Sauce is everything in an Italian restaurant, Timmons said. All sauces are sautéed and finished to order at Cafe Venezia. Only fresh tomatoes — no purees or paste — and virgin olive oil are used. Even marinara sauces are cooked halfway and then finished to order under a hot flame.

Cafe Venezia's pedigree as an Italian eatery might have been under scrutiny. After all, Timmons' partner, Artio Oliverio, left and took his moniker (Cafe Oliverio) with him earlier this year.

Longtime chef Vinco Young and sous (assistant) chef Gordon Horton remain. So, too, does head waiter Steve Stearn, still taking orders and providing the wine list.

"A lot of places have their marinaras on a steam table. That ruins the whole culture of a marinara," said Young, who has been a chef for 12 years.

"Consistency is very important in terms of the quality," Timmons added. "We don't allow any deviation."

The Farmington Hills resident deviated from the corporate

course path to restaurateur.

He worked as a buyer of integrated circuits at IBM for eight years. In 1980, Timmons opened the Peacock Cafe and Grill. The place became Cafe Oliverio in 1995.

"I'm not a politician," said Timmons about corporate life. "If you're not a politician, your skill can only take you so far. I needed to be my own boss."

Actually, Timmons said customers are his supervisors. As a result, his time sheet extends beyond the 40-hour work week.

Sixty hours and more are not uncommon, Timmons said.

"In the food service business, there is a fine line between success and failure," said Timmons, who earned a business degree at Michigan State University. "You have to keep a pulse on your business every day."

"You have to make sure you're here to listen. You have to make sure you're here to take care of the little details, like picking something off of the floor."

Timmons peers around the corner to make sure someone is not waiting to be seated.

## Oil spill creates traffic headache

By TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

■ 'It was a mess.'

Scott Herrmann  
—Farmington police

A "mess" of an accident is how Farmington Public Safety Detective Scott Herrmann described a bizarre, two-vehicle collision that occurred about 3:25 p.m. Monday at Nine Mile-Farmington roads.

Spilling out into the intersection were some 40 gallons of used motor oil — being carried in open buckets in the flat bed of a 17-year-old Farmington Hills man's pick-up truck.

"The oil, combined with the rain, caused some pretty bad (traffic) problems," Herrmann said. "There were slippery conditions and a lot of oil draining into the sewer system."

The injury accident bottlenecked traffic — first to enable police and emergency personnel to attend to a 38-year-old Westland woman who sustained minor cuts and bruises and then because of extensive clean-up efforts that continued until about 7 p.m.

"It was a mess," lamented Herrmann. "It was probably the one vehicle in the entire metropolitan Detroit area (with) open containers of motor oil."

According to Herrmann, the accident occurred after the driver of a 1993 Cadillac Eldorado, headed eastbound on Nine Mile, failed to yield to the oncoming pick-up truck upon turning north onto Farmington Road. The driver, a 50-year-old Redford resident, was uninjured. She was ticketed for failure to yield. Her passenger, the Westland woman, was extracted from the Cadillac with The Jaws of Life and transported to Botsford Hospital with a small cut on her head and an injured leg. Herrmann said her injuries were not

considered life-threatening.

After the collision, most of the 10 five-gallon buckets of motor oil, being taken to a nearby Department of Public Services building, dumped out onto the intersection.

The oil was from "home oil changes," said Herrmann, adding that the 17-year-old truck driver was taking it to the DPS building thinking oil was being accepted for recycling purposes. "Which they are not," he added.

Herrmann said the Farmington Hills man faces misdemeanor charges of driving a vehicle carrying open oil containers. If convicted, he likely would have to repay extensive clean-up costs.

An environmental company, Marine Pollution Control of Detroit, was called upon to clean up the accident site before too much of the oil seeped down into drains and sewers in the intersection. Herrmann said about 95 percent of the spilled oil was successfully absorbed.

To help in the clean-up, manhole covers also were protected.

Farmington Hills Police assisted with traffic control, Herrmann said.

The accident took place in the vicinity of the DPS, where soil already was being tested for traces of fuel, following the recent removal of three underground storage fuel tanks. But Herrmann said the fuel spillage from the accident would not affect those tests.

## Hills police zero in on armed robbery suspect

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A 27-year-old Oak Park man arrested for fleeing and eluding police is also a suspect in a rash of armed robberies, including two in Farmington Hills.

An elderly couple and a woman on her lunch break were held up at gunpoint while in or near their vehicles in Farmington Hills.

"He is a suspect in both those cases," said Chuck Nebus, Hills police commander. Similar armed robberies have been reported in Bloomfield Township and Oak Park.

A police line up was to take place Wednesday afternoon in Oakland County jail where the man is being held on \$25,000 cash bond. On Monday, he was arraigned on charges for fleeing Oak Park police Saturday.

Farmington Hills police detectives developed leads from a vehicle description and a partial plate provided in one of the hold ups and notified Oak Park police. Oak Park police tried to stop the 1993 Pontiac Grand

Prix after it crossed several lanes of traffic without signaling.

The driver refused to pull over and a chase ensued on westbound Nine Mile and southbound Southfield Freeway service drive before being discontinued. Detroit police later arrested the driver without incident at a party store on the southeast corner of Livernois and Puritan.

On Aug. 2, a couple — a man, 34, and wife, 33 — were held-up for \$130 cash in the parking lot outside the Hallmark store on Middlebelt and 11 Mile Road. A 32-year-old Roseville woman was also robbed at gunpoint in a parking lot on Northwestern Highway and Middlebelt near Oakland Commerce Bank Aug. 4.

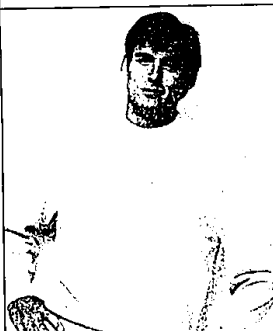
A gunman also robbed two women, one from Farmington Hills, in a parking lot on Telegraph and Square Lake roads in Bloomfield Township. The robber took off in a teal Grand Am, reports said.

In all three cases, the assailant was described as a thinly-built black male 25-30 years old and 6-feet in height.

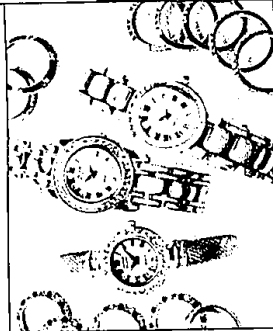
through August 17

last 4 days!

pre **sale** season **25%** off throughout the store



Men's mock top by Signore. Cashmere-like cotton/viscose. Stone, blue, olive, burgundy, grey or black. Imported. Sizes M-XXL. In Men's. Reg. \$65, sale \$49.



Quartz watches by Anne Klein with interchangeable bezels. Choose from six styles. In Fashion Jewelry. Reg. \$100, sale \$69.

Hooded safari jacket. Polyester microfiber with zip-out wool/polyester lining. Tobacco or indigo. Imported. Misses' sizes XS, S, M, L. Potties' sizes XSP, SP, MP. In Coats. Reg. \$109, sale \$79.



20-piece porcelain dinnerware set by a famous American designer. Includes 4 dinner plates, 4 salad/dessert plates, 4 bread/butter plates, 4 cups and 4 saucers. Also, 25% off serving pieces. In China, Crystal and Silver. Reg. \$132, sale \$99.

Abigail leggings set by Zeddes. Cotton/Lycra®. Aqua multi. Made in the USA. Toddlers' 2T-4T. Girls' S,M,L (4-6X and 7-14). Reg. \$60-\$68, sale \$44-\$49.

Women's chunky penny loafer by Steve Madden. Leather upper. Black or brown. Imported. Full and half sizes. 22-24. In Shoes. Reg. \$72, sale \$49.

# Jacobson's

Birmingham  
(248) 644-4900

Livonia  
(313) 591-7696

Rochester  
(248) 651-6000