

DINING

Remodeled Golden Mushroom marks Silver Anniversary

By ELIZABETH HEALD
SPECIAL WRITER

Sporting a facelift, The Golden Mushroom, a Southfield landmark, celebrates 25 years of upscale fine dining. Owner Reid Ashton has watched the restaurant business change over the last quarter century. Fine dining has disappeared from all but the top hotels and the bistro trend now appeals with its casual atmosphere and attire.

"There's always a need for high-quality restaurants," Ashton commented. "People still want caviar, champagne, foie gras and soufflés. When they order them, they want a refined, upscale atmosphere. The Golden Mushroom's loyal customer base exists not because we follow the latest trend, but because we don't."

Food has always been a passion for this Detroit native and Michigan State University hotel management school graduate who reflects his philosophy in the restaurant's name. Mushrooms are not trendy; they are always in style. And they have been golden for Ashton. During the spring season, about 4,000 pounds of Washington and Oregon morel mushrooms are purchased then frozen for use throughout the year. Morels are always a part of the \$12.50 popular seasonal wild mushroom appetizer.

Ashton opened the Golden Mushroom in late summer 1972 in what had been a deli upstairs with lower-level banquet room. This arrangement suited his still operative two-restaurants-in-one theme. Main level features elegant, full-service dining and downstairs, the Mushroom Cellar has a casual, pub-style ambience.

Renovations designed by Birmingham's Victor Saroki & Associates and executed by contractor Joseph M. Adams & Associates have made more than subtle changes. New entry floor and circular host station welcome guests to the now open and spacious main dining room done in shades of brown, cranberry and cream. New chairs, reupholstered booths, new lighting and carpeting complement the color scheme and feeling of greater space. Four new, plush oval-shaped booths, seating six comfortably, have been added. Gone are the wooden dividers with the mushroom cutout, replaced by

The Golden Mushroom
Where: 18100 West 10 Mile Road, Southfield, just west of Southfield Road (248) 559-4230.
Hours: Monday through Friday, lunch 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and dinner 5-11 p.m. Saturday, dinner only 5:30 p.m. to midnight.
Menu: Eclectic and cutting-edge selection of difficult to execute dishes prepared with passion and attention to every detail.
Cost: Appetizers \$9.50-15.50; main courses \$28 on average.
Reservations: Preferred.
Credit cards: All majors accepted.

modern, decorative metal grills with etched glass panels. Remodeling is complete except for two six-foot diameter dining room chandeliers and another smaller, metal and art glass light fixture to be placed over the hostess table later this month.

Rolled out this week is a new menu ably executed by Executive Chef Derin Moore who joined the Golden Mushroom in July. No stranger to the local dining scene, Moore spent eight years at Pontiac's Pike Street Restaurant before opening a recent, short stint at Bay Harbor Yacht Club in Petoskey. In the kitchen, made famous by now-retired Chef Milos Cihelka, Moore sees himself as second generation passing on a legacy.

"Chef Milos trained Brian Polcyn (now chef/owner of Milford's Five Lakes Grill) and Brian trained me," Moore said. "It is rewarding to direct a quality kitchen where chefs want to practice the art of fine cooking." Moore's autumn menu takes the Golden Mushroom to new heights. Lovers will still find the Golden Mushroom soup and Lobster Bisque along with Imported Fresh Russian Beluga Matossal Caviar, but two appetizers in particular can be described as cutting edge. Foie gras, nearly synonymous with the Golden Mushroom, has had the bar raised. Sautéed Hudson Valley Foie Gras now comes with a Pomegranate Spiced Doughnut, Kumquat-Red Onion Chutney and Port Wine Syrup \$15.50. Chevre Cheese Soufflé "Riverdale Meadow" Chanterelle Duxelle is in an edible Roast



Landmark restaurant: Executive Chef Derin Moore and restaurant owner Reid Ashton in the dining room of the newly renovated Golden Mushroom in Southfield, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Sweet Onion Cup accompanied by Arugula Salad and Aged Sherry Vinaigrette \$12.50.

Among new entrees are Roast Ringuet Bratwurst Raviole on Braised White Endive, Baby Onion Rings, Cracked Black Pepper and Warm Apple Cider Jus \$26.50. The bratwurst is made from pheasant leg meat. There's Hot Pepper Jelly Basted Indiana Duckling with Four Grain Blend, Glazed Brussels Sprouts and Wild Mushroom—Potpourri \$23.50. The jelly, a blend of four sweet to hot peppers, is used to baste and caramelize duck skin during roasting, thereby increasing the intensity and complexity of flavors.

Expressive of the learning curve Moore has been on during

his tenure on the U.S. Culinary Olympic Team plus first place recognition and three gold medals for Mystery Basket Competitions this year alone is his preparation of Roast Venison \$26.50. It's rubbed with a caramelized wild clover honey "candy" and served with rutabaga-yam hash, crispy parsnip chips and balsamic jus. For this dish, honey and sugar are caramelized then star anise, juniper berries, allspice and a trio of peppercorns are added. This mixture is poured onto a marble slab to crystallize as "candy" then it's pulverized and used as an apicing.

Among the roasted meats Porcini and Arrogance Injected Veal Chop, Roasted Garlic and

Buttermilk Whipped Potatoes, Smoked Shiitake Sauce and Fire-roasted Carrots \$27 stands out. Porcini are cooked in a mixture of arragnac, fresh herbs and spices to make a marinade that's injected into the veal loin before chops are cut.

"I'm not reinventing food, but I am looking at different ways to increase flavors, complexity and intensity of everything on the plate," Moore commented. And this is his strength, multiple layers of flavors all harmonizing in dramatic, palate tantalizing focus. If you compare prices, the Golden Mushroom ranks as mod-

estly priced for the level of culinary excellence and the service rendered by general manager Kevin Frantz and his expert dining room staff.

In honor of the Golden Mushroom's anniversary, four special dinners with limited seating are planned - Tuesday, October 21, Game Birds \$75; Tuesday, November 4, Game Meats \$85; Thursday, November 20, Chef Derin Presents \$75; and Monday, December 1, a wine dinner with a yet-to-be-named California wine producer \$85. Prices exclude tax and gratuity. Please restaurant for special menus.

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