

DINING

Supper Club theme clicks at Clawson Steak House

BY ELEANOR HEALD SPECIAL WRITER

Established in 1958 by brothers Greg and Paul Alexopoulos, the Clawson Steak House is one of only two remaining upscale Supper Clubs in the Detroit suburb. The other is Excalibur in Southfield.

Since the late 1980s, second generation, Nick, John Alexopoulos, and Jim Alex carry on tradition, but are at the same time, in tune with dining preferences of the 90s. They've had the now-popular steakhouse concept in motion for a decade!

Nick and his cousin Jim manage all aspects of the business or in restaurant lingo, "the front of the house." One of them is always on premise to greet diners, a large percentage of whom are regulars. Nick's brother John is executive chef. All three family members grow up in the restaurant business and are infectiously enthusiastic about their continuing success.

"We don't advertise," Nick said. "New customers find us by word of mouth. A lot of our regular customers were brought here by their parents and now they are bringing their kids. There were a number of restaurants like this in the 1970s and young people are curious about that era."

You've got that right! Who would have predicted the current Tony Bennett phenomenon? The sign on the entry door sets expectations. "No shorts or tee shirts. Proper attire required." Get a booth in the bar smoking

Clawson Steak House
Where: 66 S. Rochester Road (south of 14 Mile Road), Clawson, (248) 588-5788.
Hours: Lunch Monday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dinner Monday through Thursday 4-11 p.m., Friday and Saturday until midnight.
Menu: Supper Club style steakhouse featuring not only beef but veal and fresh seafood. Extensive daily-dated specials at both lunch and dinner.
Entertainment: Live band Wednesday and Thursday 7:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Friday and Saturday 6 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Cost: Lunch sandwiches \$3.50-7; entree-a-la-carte \$6-7.50; specials \$7-10. Dinner appetizers \$4-6; steaks, chops, veal and seafood \$9-22.
Reservations: accepted, but on Friday and Saturday, for tables of six or more only.
Credit cards: all majors accepted.

area or sit at one of the 20 comfortable stools at the bar. The main supper club, done in soft tones of mauve and two-toned blue, has upholstered booths seating four. Tables, many snuggled close to the fairly-large dance floor below the stage, seat two, four or six in comfortably-large upholstered chairs.
The Mark James Band (keyboard, percussion and vocals) performs live on stage from Wednesday through Saturday for both listening and dancing pleasure. "Other than a wedding, this is one of the only places you can dance close," Jim remarked.
A long list of appetizers are dinner eye catchers. Encouraged, sautéed in garlic butter is \$6, and touting Greek family traditions of the owners, Saganaki, "Opa" flamed tableside at \$4 are among the hits. Not into starters? The Baked French

Onion Soup awaits.
While defining itself as a steakhouse and calling its 30-ounce porterhouse \$22 "a steaks-eater's dream," fish selections are among the top sellers. Royal Oak's Superior Fish Company makes eight to 10 deliveries of fresh seafood each week. Two combos top the list, Surf and Turf at market price and New York and Shrimp Orly, a 12-ounce New York strip steak and golden-fried, beer-battered shrimp, incredibly reasonable at \$16. It comes, as do all entrees, with soup, salad and choice of vegetable, potato or pasta.
Other popular seafood entrees are Lake Superior White Fish, broiled and lightly-seasoned \$11, one full pound of Alaskan King Crab Legs \$20 and deboned, broiled fillet of Holland Dover Sole Almondine \$17.



At your service: Jim Alex (left), Executive Chef John Alexopoulos, and Nick Alexopoulos carry on the tradition of the Clawson Steak House. Jim and his cousin Nick manage "the front of the house," while John works in the kitchen.

Three preparations of Provimi veal are menu staples at \$12-14. Choose from Piccata, Marsala or Parmesan. And where else can you always find Roundhouse style (lightly-battered, garlic-accented and deep-fried) Frog Legs \$12? Or Beef Stroganoff as one of the daily specials? And calves liver smothered with onions \$9?
Chef John Alexopoulos touts his specials. Gordon Doyon, co-

owner of Birmingham's Doyon Brothers Salon and a regular at the Clawson Steak House, confirms. "The lamb chops here are the best ever." Marinated and rack cut, lamb chops are char-broiled. Three are \$15 and five are \$22. "I like leftovers for lunch the next day, so I always order five." Doyon says. "But the very best is the Land and Sea special, two lamb chops and

large file of grilled salmon."
To add elegance to meal selections is a focused wine list with high-profile producers from the California, France and Italy. Six white wines are at \$20 or below in a range between \$16-\$60. Red wines are \$17.25-\$70 per bottle. Champagnes and sparkling wines run \$17-\$185 for top-of-the-line Tattinger Comtes de Champagne Rose.

WHAT'S COOKING

OAKLAND GRILL
■ Chef Louai Sharkas' sushi complimentary at the bar every Thursday 8-11 p.m.
■ Through December, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, live Maine lobster dinners including dessert \$24.95. Wednesday through Saturday, appetizer portion 1/2-pound fresh jumbo Stone Crab claws \$14.95 or as part of a specially prepared entree with dressings \$29.95.
■ Jazz now three days a week. Larry Nozoro Duo Tuesday 5:30-9:30 p.m. Pianist Buddy Hudson and vocalist Ursula Walter Wednesday 7:30-11:30 p.m. through November. Thursday 7:30-11:30 p.m. Larry Smith Trio through November. Beginning December vocalist Kathy Kosias every Wednesday 7:30-10:30 p.m.
■ Wednesday, December 3, beginning at 6 p.m., a five-course dinner matched with beers from Bell's Beers of Kalamazo, \$38. Reservations (248) 549-7700.
Oakland Grill is at 32832 Woodward just south of 14 Mile Road Royal Oak.
NAME CHANGE
Stir Crazy Cafe, 144 Mary Alexander in downtown Northville was recently renamed

Sizzling Sticks. Dorie Freebry of Northville won a contest to find a creative new name for the restaurant after the owners named the name, "Stir Crazy" already belonged to another restaurant. Sizzling Sticks offers a Mongolian-Barbecue style menu. Diners are invited to step into the kitchen and make themselves at home. First stop is the salad bar, then you have to choose what kind of meat you want - chicken, beef, pork, lamb, calamari, shrimp, cod, turkey. They also have tofu. Then there's a wide variety of vegetables to choose from, broccoli, red, yellow and green peppers to name a few, spices and sauces "from mild to savory, from zesty to flavorful." The chef will prepare your dish while you wait, and watch. Customers who don't have all-you-can-eat appetites will appreciate the non-trip stir-fry and salad bar option. There's a kid's menu, and you can also order just the salad bar. Rice and tortillas are served hot with your meal. Fresh Italian penne pasta is also available. Ask your server for a list of beverages and desserts. For more information, call (248) 380-9400.

Gobble up Thanksgiving Day at fine area restaurants

BY ELEANOR HEALD SPECIAL WRITER
Check out these Thanksgiving Day options, and there are many in addition to turkey at the following fine restaurants. Reserving in advance is strongly advised and in some cases essential.
■ **Botsford Inn** - 2900 Grand River, Farmington Hills (248) 474-4800. Seatings for a Thanksgiving buffet in the main dining room begin at noon and can be scheduled on the hour until 4 p.m. In the coach house, seatings are 1:00, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. The beautiful buffet begins with salads, relishes and vegetable crudite and includes, in addition to roast turkey with savory dressing and all the trimmings, sliced roast beef, smoked cider-baked ham or baked cod fish. Cost \$19.95 per person. Children 10 and under half price.
■ **Charley's Crab** - 5498 Crooks Road, Troy, next to Northfield Hilton, (248) 879-2060. From noon to 3 p.m. Charley's Crab will serve traditional roast turkey with gilet gravy, yams, mashed potatoes and cranberry relish \$13.75. Children's portion is \$6.75. Also

offered with fresh autumn side dishes are Canadian goose in natural sauce \$17.50 and Nantucket Cape Scallops \$20.
■ **Clarkston Cafe** - 18 S. Main, Clarkston (248) 626-5660. From noon to 6 p.m., the Clarkston Cafe offers a traditional turkey dinner with stuffing, yams, cranberry sauce, vegetable, mashed potatoes and gravy \$14.95. Children under five years old get a free turkey dinner with purchase of an adult entree. Other choices besides turkey include, prizo rib, pork loin, portabella mushroom with grilled vegetables, whitefish and steamed mussels in a white wine garlic sauce. Prices range \$14-18.
■ **Excalibur** - 28575 Franklin Road, (corner of 12 Mile Road and Northwestern Highway), Southfield, (248) 368-3365. Open for dinner 2-10 p.m. Service will be from the dinner menu and includes Thanksgiving specials.
Or pick up a complete dinner package for 6 to 8 people for \$110. This package must be reserved ahead and picked up between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. Thanksgiving Day.
■ **Oakland Grill** - 32832

Woodward Avenue, Royal Oak (248) 549-7700. Tempting turkey-day palates will be Chef Louai Sharkas' elegant "feast for the ages" buffet. Three seatings, 1:00 p.m., 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. at \$24.95 for adults; \$12.95 for kids under 12; and toddlers free.
■ **Rochester Chop House** - 306 North Main, Rochester (248) 651-2266. "Thanksgiving at our house" is the special theme from noon to 7 p.m. Tom turkey served with garlic buttered mashed potatoes, stuffing, gilet gravy, spaghetti squash and cranberry sauce is \$14.95. Children's portion for ages 13 and under \$5.96. But if you'd prefer roasted goose \$16.95 or venison \$18.95, that's also on the menu

along with selected popular items from the Chop House menu.
■ **Townsend Hotel Rugby Grille** - 100 Townsend Street, Birmingham, (248) 642-5999. From noon until 10 p.m. the Thanksgiving Day menu is pre-fixed (all-inclusive with the exception of beverage) with a variety of entree selections: traditional Thanksgiving with all the fixings \$42, roast prime rib \$44, broiled Lake Superior Whitefish \$42, roast rack of lamb, \$49 or portabella mushroom and oven-roasted tomato tossed with fettucini \$40.

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