

DINING

Mountain King settled in new Birmingham location

BY ELEANOR HEALD
SPECIAL WRITER

After 14 years on Maple Road in Birmingham, Mountain King moved to a new Birmingham location late last summer. About 90 percent of the menu is the same, but owners Steve Tsung and his wife, Chung En, have added some new house specialties such as Sesame Chicken, General Tso's Chicken and Seafood Lo Mein to their extensive and popular menu.

"When Kruger bought the property on Maple to construct his Birmingham Super Kruger store, the Tsungs lost their lease. Steve wanted to stay in Birmingham. Pearl's Chinese restaurant owners were willing to strike a lease deal. It took two months to renovate the former Pearl's to the updated version of Mountain King."

"Many regulars come in and don't even look at the menu anymore," Steve Tsung said. "They order the number one favorite Mongolian Beef \$7.75."

Other popular selections are Kung-Pao Chicken \$7.25; Cashew Chicken \$7.50; Yu-Shan Double Jumbo shrimp and tender scallops with bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, black mushrooms and green beans in a spicy garlic sauce \$11; Mountain King Shrimp (shrimp with Chinese vegetables in a spicy brown sauce) \$9.50; and Seafood Combination (scallops, shrimp, crabmeat and squid with assorted Chinese vegetables in oyster sauce served on a sizzling plate) \$11.

For the uninitiated in the differences among Mandarin, Szechuan and Cantonese styles of cooking, Tsung explained that Mandarin is more flavorful. Dishes are prepared with garlic

Mountain King Chinese Restaurant
Where: 405 Old Woodward, Birmingham (248) 644-2913.
Hours: 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday; until 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; noon to 9 p.m. Sunday.
Menu: Mandarin, Szechuan and Cantonese specialties served at lunch and dinner.
Cost: Lunch specials \$5-\$8. Dinner \$6.50-\$11. Multi-course family dinners for 2-6 people \$21-\$60.
Reservations: Accepted.
Credit cards: All majors accepted.

and ginger. He cited Mongolian Beef as an example. Szechuan style is spicy brown sauces with ginger, such as General Tso's Chicken. Chop Suey and Chow Mein are Cantonese.

He also gave the following glossary of terms. Kung-Pao includes peanuts. Yu-Shan has lots of garlic. Hunan is prepared with spices and broccoli. Moo-Shu is classic Mandarin served with pancakes. Ta-Chien indicates black mushrooms and Yen Ching is a combination plate.

Tsung is native Mandarin who lives in Troy with his wife and two children. In 1979 at age 11, he came to the United States from Taiwan where his family was in the restaurant business. "Essentially, I am chef/owner, but my father often helps my chef ru Shi Fang in the kitchen. My mother is also a great cook."

Although Mountain King does not have a restaurant license, it includes a number of dishes kids like to eat. In addition to Lo Mein (soft noodle) dishes and chicken in every form, Tsung said kids love the fried crabmeat dumplings.

A family dinner for two \$21 including sizzling rice soup, egg rolls, crabmeat dumplings, Mongolian Beef and Kung-Pao Chicken is so generous that it easily feeds two adults and two chil-

dren under 10. Family dinners for more than two people are even more generous. The \$60 dinner for six will make everyone in a crowd of friends or large family very happy and satisfied.

You can sample a number of condiments, if you order fried or steamed dumplings. Six come with the order for \$4. There's hot sauce with red pepper, designed to make Szechuan dishes as spicy-hot. Sesame soy sauce is great with dumplings or you can request Hoisin. The steamed dumplings, in addition to being healthier, are filled with natural, delicious flavors, covered up when fried.

Peking Duck \$25 serves two. You can have it in two courses with delicious duck soup if you like. As is the tradition, it comes Moo-Shu style so you can enjoy the crispy skin. Order it a half hour before arriving at the restaurant or make the request when you reserve.

Mountain King does not have a liquor license but serves delightful hot tea.

"The color of tea is not an indication of quality," Tsung said. "You can tell tea quality by aroma." If you like Jasmine "green" tea, request it. It's not steeped, but comes in packets. It's Steve Tsung's favorite and it might become yours.



New location: Steve Tsung and his wife, Chung En present one of their specialty dishes in the dining room at Mountain King.

The bright, attractive restaurant with sound dividers appeals to retired Birmingham dentist Vince Greenan and his wife, Mary Lou. They make their home in Bloomfield Hills and have frequented Mountain King for years.

"This is our favorite Chinese restaurant," Mary Lou said. "I'm vegetarian, so I like Chinese. I order Vegetarian Delight \$6.25 which is always perfect."

Dr. Vince's favorite is sweet and sour chicken \$7.

In choosing an authentic Chinese restaurant when I'm on a trip, I peer into the windows. If I see a significant number of people of Chinese origin eating, I

judge that it will be good. But Steve Tsung passed on these clues. "Look at the menu. If there's a section titled 'Noodle in Soup,' that's authentic Chinese. There should also be a lot of seafood dishes including sea cucumber and squid with Chinese Napa. A good Chinese menu always has beef with ginger and onions and beef with mixed vegetables."

Check all of the above at Mountain King!

Look for Ray and Eleanor Heald's Focus on Wine column in Taste on the first and third Sunday of the month.

EATING OUT IN THE SUBURBS

Just in case you missed it, or lost the paper. Here are some of the restaurants we've recently visited:

■ **Flying Fish Tavern** - Where: 6450 Orchard Lake Road, (corner of Maple Road) West Bloomfield (248) 865-8888. Hours: 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday; 3 p.m. to midnight Sunday. Menu: Casual neighborhood family eatery serves comfort foods with special focus on fresh catches of the day. Cost: Appetizers and dinner salads \$4-\$8; sandwiches and burgers \$5.50-\$7; pastas \$7-\$9; big plates, specials and catch of the day \$9-\$15; desserts \$2-\$4. Reservations: For parties of six or more only. Credit cards: All majors accepted.

■ **Wood-Ruff's** - Where: 212 W. Sixth St., Royal Oak, (248) 586-1519. Hours: Monday through Saturday 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., Sundays 4-9 p.m. Menu: Modern culinary twists on classics such as steaks, chops, duck and seafood served in a highly stylized, adult supper club atmosphere where jazz is kind of sound. Cost: Starters \$3-\$7. Entrees \$14-\$24 accompanied by salad, starch as appropriate and vegetable garnish. Reservations: Recommended. Credit cards: All majors accepted.

■ **O'Grady's Irish Pub** - 585 W. Big Beaver, Troy, (adjacent to the Drury Inn) (248) 524-4770. Open 11-2 a.m. Monday-Saturday; noon to 1 a.m. Sunday. Menu: Irish theme, emphasis on fresh in best. More than 75 menu items from Irish specialties to Hebridean National award-winning corned beef to deep-dish Chicago-style pizza with crispy crust are homemade. Cost: Starters and soups \$3-\$7; burgers and sandwiches \$6-\$8; Irish specialties \$10; chicken, seafood, beef and ribs \$8.50-\$15. Reservations: Not accepted. Credit cards: All majors accepted.

■ **Mesquite Creek** - Two locations, 45250 Ford Road, Canton (734) 414-0100; and 7228 Ortonville Road, Clarkston, (248) 620-9300. Open 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday. Menu: Szechuan fare with great seafood. Mesquite Creek takes a Tex-Mex spin on everything they do.

dine free. Among the many culinary treats planned is a special Omelet Station where diners can select their own favorite ingredients for the chef to fold into each omelet. There will also be blintzes, carved roast beef, Honey Baked Ham, Roasted Chicken, salad bar, dessert table and more.

RESTAURANT SPECIALS

Restaurant Specials features restaurant openings and renovations, menu specials, and anniversaries. Send announcements to: Keely Wygonik, Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or fax (734) 591-7279. You can also e-mail information to kwgonik@ec-homemedia.net

EASTER BRUNCH
■ Big Rock Chop & Brew House - 245 S. Eton Street, Birmingham (248) 647-7774.

beginning 10:30 a.m. with lunch entrees beginning at \$12. Dinner follows with entrees starting at \$17.

Executive chef Randy Smith has been working overtime to prepare for his first Easter at Big Rock. To traditional big Rock favorites, Chef Randy will add Double cut Lamb Chops, Moroccan Sea Scallops with Orange Ginger Sauce, Baked Ham with Branded Peaches, Chicken Chamba with Fresh Berries, and Savory Bread Pudding with Pheasant Sausage.

■ MacKinnon's - 126 E.

Main, Northville, (248) 348-1991, 1 to 6 p.m. Regular menu and Easter specials range \$18-\$26. For kids 12 and under \$6-\$8 along with a raffle of Beanie Babies.

Not regularly open on Sundays, owner Tom MacKinnon believes Easter is special. This year, in addition to regular menu items, he's adding House-smoked

Pork Loin, Turkey with Herb Dressing and Lobster dishes using the freshest from his lobster tank.

■ **Encore** - 1801 S. Telegraph in the Bloomfield Hills Quality Inn, (248) 335-3790, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cost \$12.95 per person, children 6-12, \$6, children under 5

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