

Romantic restaurants

Play Cupid, woo your Valentine with a lovely dinner

BY RENEE SKOGLUND
STAFF WRITER
rskoglund@homecomm.net

Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet ... but not as sweet as dining with you!

We've spared no expense (yours) to find the most romantic, fine-dining spots in town to wine and woo your favorite Valentine. If the atmosphere doesn't seduce you, the food will. All you have to do is make reservations quicker than a heartbeat.

■ **Cafe Cortina**, 30716, W. 10 Mile, Farmington Hills, (248) 474-3033. Cost: About \$100, excluding wine. Dinner hour: Begins 5 p.m.

Good cooking is like love, simple yet divine, said Adrian Tonon, who co-owns the restaurant with his mother, Rina.

Since 1976, lovers have wine and dined at Cafe Cortina, especially in the fireplace room. "It's very cozy, warm and welcoming. There's something in the air that's so romantic," says Tonon.

Tonon suggests starting with an antipasti of bruschetta, a portabella mushroom au poivre, and sliced zucchini with fresh mozzarella and tomato. For pasta, maybe something with fresh tomato, cream and a hint of goat cheese. For the main entrée, why not a braised leg of lamb sliced at your table? Dessert, of course, will be chocolate.

■ **Emily's** - 605 N. Center, Northville, (248) 349-6505. Cost: Appetizers, \$7-\$18; dinners, \$19-\$35. Dinner hour: Begins 5:30 p.m.

Small and intimate, Emily's is in a Victorian-style house. There's room for just 60 diners, some of whom will be lucky

enough to sit by the fireplace. "We're a romantic restaurant with really, really wonderful French-inspired cuisine," said owner and chef Rick Halberg.

Suggestions: An appetizer of champagne lobster ravioli with butter-poached scallops, an arugula salad with cured foie gras, and an entree of roast duck with vanilla-flavored sweet potatoes. For dessert? A chocolate truffle tart with macadamia praline and a port wine caramel.

■ **Cafe Bon Homme** - 844 Penniman, Plymouth, (734) 453-6260. Cost: Four-course prefixed dinner, \$45 per person. Dinner hour: Begins 5 p.m. (last reservation 9 p.m.)

Owner Greg Goodman promises to "pull out all the stops" for Valentine couples dining in his comfortably elegant little restaurant, which he describes as a "chic, upscale, Left Bank bistro."

Goodman doesn't know all the delights Chef Jeff Condit will prepare for the Valentine Day weekend, but they will have a French influence with lots of "shoot-from-the-hip" American imagination. Dessert will definitely be chocolate enough to cause heart palpitations.

■ **La Bistecca Italian Grille** - 39405 Plymouth Road, Livonia, (734) 254-0400. Cost: About \$100 for two, excluding wine.

Dinner hour: Begins 5 p.m.

"The atmosphere is really conducive to a special evening because of the food and our extreme attention to detail and service," said owner Jerry Costanza. La Bistecca specializes in Piedmontese beef, considered by many chefs to be the most tender.

Suggestions: Gambieri con Asparago (a shrimp-and-asparagus appetizer for two) followed by a sampling of homemade ravi-

oli and an entree of fillet mignon, lobster or a surf 'n' turf. Dessert must be tiramisu, made from the chef's own heart-throbbing recipe. Top it off with a cappuccino.

■ **Marco's** - 32748 Grand River, downtown Farmington, (248) 477-7777. Cost: Entrees \$15-\$27. Dinner hour: Begins 3 p.m. Monday-Friday, 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Marco's is small, just 20 tables for up to 80 lucky diners. "It's a very romantic place - candlelight, white linen tablecloths and fresh flowers all over the place. It's very intimate, dimly lit, with soft music in the background," says owner and chef Marco Conte.

Conte suggests teasing your appetite with pan-seared calamari tossed with lemon. Next, try the Fillet a la Gorgonzola or Cherry Hamlet Chicken, a succulent breast sautéed with Michigan dried cherries and a splash of Frangelico. For dessert, it's definitely the heart-shaped creme brulee with fresh strawberries.

■ **MacKinnon's** - 126 E. Main, Northville, (248) 348-1991. Cost: \$100 for two. Dinner hour: 5-10 p.m.

For 20 years, the restaurant's brick walls, lace curtains and Tiffany lamps have charmed countless diners. "We are a small, romantic family-owned restaurant in a quaint Victorian town," says owner Tom MacKinnon.

Suggestions: The appetizer platter for two, which includes crab pasta, French truffle, escargot, the house pate, shrimp cocktail, oysters and crab-stuffed mushrooms. Next, an entree of rack of lamb with black currant sauce. For dessert, there are choices: A towering chocolate

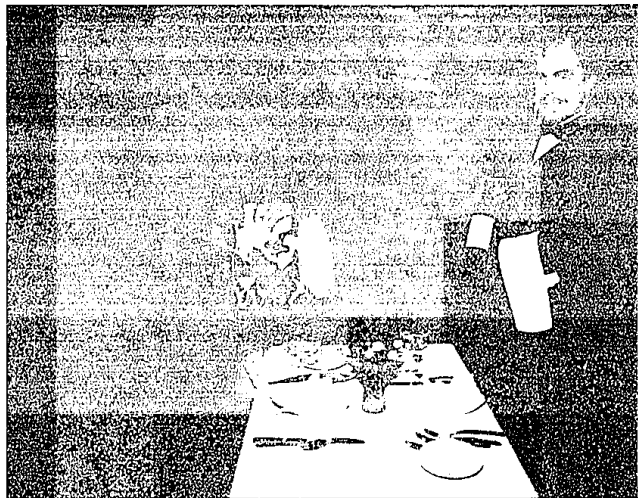


Table for two: Fireside dining is just soooo romantic at Cafe Cortina. Tim Bailey stands ready to make your Valentine's Day dinner a memorable occasion ... a little vino, a little pasta, and lots of attention.

mousse with fresh strawberries, chocolate sauce and a chocolate roof or Bannan Wellington, a puffed pastry with caramel sauce, walnuts, brown sugar, and rum.

■ **Fonte D'Amore** - 32020 Plymouth Road, Livonia, (734) 422-0770. Dinner hour: 4-10 p.m. Cost: \$12-\$26, regular

menu.

Could lovers go wrong at a place whose name means "fountain of love"? Impossible, said owner Luciano Delsignore. The setting is dark and soft-colored with cozy booths and a fireplace. "We kind of theme on romance."

Del Signore suggests a shrimp

scampi appetizer, followed by Filet Marino, a pan-roasted center-cut tenderloin with shallots, mushrooms, Marsala, brandy and cream. You might also try a little rigatoni with fresh tomatoes in a basil sauce with fresh mozzarella. For dessert, nothing other than a house-made tiramisu.

Mama Mia
BANQUET ACCOMMODATIONS FOR UP TO 300 GUESTS • LIVONIA ONLY
17775 PLYMOUTH ROAD • LIVONIA, MI 48150
(734) 427-5202 (734) 427-6700 (248) 363-0000

Chamber Music Society of Detroit
Presents the
BORROMEO STRING QUARTET
with
JAMES DUNHAM, Viola
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2000, 8 P.M.
DETROIT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL
SELIGMAN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
Beethoven: Quartet in B-Flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6, "La Malinconia"
Prokofiev: Quartet No. 1 in B minor, Op. 50
Dvorak: Viola Quintet in E-Flat Major, Op. 97
CLEVELAND QUARTET AWARD CONCERT
SPONSORED BY EPEI AND DAVID WEINBERG
"The Borromeo String Quartet is simply the best there is on the planet..."
Ticket prices from \$19 to \$65, students \$15.
Tickets are available at all major ticket centers, including Hudson's and Harmony House stores.
To charge tickets by phone, call (248) 645-6666.
For additional information, call the Chamber Music Society of Detroit at (248) 757-9990 or visit www.CMSofDetroit.org

BIRMINGHAM BLOOMFIELD ArtCenter
VISIT OUR GALLERY SHOP FOR
VALENTINE'S DAY
PURCHASE ARTISTIC VALENTINE GIFTS FOR THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE.
BLOWN GLASS HEARTS \$15 each
JEWELRY, SILK SCARVES, BLOWN GLASS VASES, PERFUME BOTTLES, CERAMICS AND MANY MORE FINE GIFTS AVAILABLE
BIRMINGHAM BLOOMFIELD ART CENTER
1818 SOUTH CHESAPEAKE ROAD
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35203
NORTHWEST CORNER OF 14th & CHESAPEAKE RD.
WWW.BARTCENTER.ORG
(248) 844-0868
SPONSORED BY THE OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS

Sposita's Ristorante
FINE ITALIAN CUISINE
Specializing In Steaks, Veal, Chicken and Pasta
10% Any Lunch Entree OFF
Hours: Tues.-Thurs. 11am - 10pm
Fri.-Sat. 11am - 11pm - Sat. 4pm
Sun & Mon - Closed
2300 Featherstone Road
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
248-334-2222

Hilton Suites
Romance your Valentine
Take your pick of romantic weekend escapes. Each includes a luxurious two-room suite, evening beverage reception, free prepared-to-order breakfast, use of indoor pool, whirlpool and fitness center - plus extras as described below.
Romance Package includes a bottle of champagne, chocolates, bubble bath and use of terry robes.
BounceBack Weekend Our low BounceBack rate starts as early as Thursday with a Saturday night stay.
For reservations visit www.hilton.com. Or call your professional travel agent, 1-800-HILTONS, or the Hilton Suites Auburn Hills at 248-334-2222.
It happens

www.hilton.com
*Romance Package offer valid now through 12/31/00, champagne included price subject to availability. *BounceBack Weekend offer valid thru Sunday now through 12/31/00. Thursday check-in requires a Saturday night stay and earlier check-out is subject to lowest available non-BounceBack rate. Limited availability, advance reservations required. Please exclude tax and gratuities, do not apply to groups or to other offers and is subject to change without notice. ©2000 Hilton Hospitality, Inc.

PRIME RIB DINNER \$14.95
MITCH HOUSEY'S
Now Appearing...
THE SHOWCASEMEN
FRI.-SAT.
28500 Schoolcraft
In the Space of 3 World-Class Venues
(734) 255-5520
AMPLE LIGHTED PARKING
OPEN DAILY MON-SAT AT 11:00 AM
COCKTAILS, DINNER, DANCE, SHOWS, FREE PARKING
Now EVERY TUESDAY & THURSDAY DAVE THE DJ
Formerly at Vickie's Steakhouse
BUSINESSMEN'S LUNCHES from \$5.95
DINNERS from \$6.95

MEADOW BROOK THEATRE
searing family drama
FEB 9 THROUGH MAR 5
Everyday decisions can have life and death consequences. Set against the backdrop of World War II, money versus morals, train apart the Kefauver and Deever families. Fortunes are made, lives are lost, and more than just secrets are locked away. This gripping tale of a father's sins visited upon his sons is one of the most intense dramas you'll see on this - or any - stage.
Written in 1947 - before Death of a Salesman - this is the work that established Arthur Miller as one of America's greatest playwrights.
BY ARTHUR MILLER
MGT. BOX OFFICE: (248) 377-3300
GROUP SALES: (248) 370-3316
www.mbttheatre.com
Made possible by:
LEAR CORPORATION
Observer & Eccentric