

DINING

Treat dad royally on Father's Day

BY RENEE SHOGLUND
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Attention, dads. Do you really want to sweat over a hot grill this Father's Day only to hear complaints that hot dogs are burnt and the hamburgers underdone? Of course not. Let someone else do the sweating.

The following restaurants serve some of the best chops, seafood and pasta in town, food fit for a king - you! Happy Father's Day.

Laffrey's Steaks on the Hearth - 24201 W. Seven Mile Road (off Telegraph), Detroit (313) 638-4688; open 5-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 5-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 4-9 p.m. Sunday. Atmosphere: Comfortably close quarters, dark, perfect for cocktails and serious dining. Menu: Chops, steaks, seafood. Great appetizers. Price: Entrées \$13.95-\$27.95; appetizers \$7.95-\$9.95. All credit cards accepted. Reservations are most on weekends. There's nothing trendy about Laffrey's, and that's good. It's probably why this family-owned restaurant has endured for 40 years while other restaurants have come and gone.

Laffrey's is a place for people - like dear old Dad - who appreci-

ate well-aged and perfectly grilled steaks and chops. Executive chef Darin Thompson, son of owner Sandy Thompson, credits the char-grill, seasonings and a special meat-aging process with producing great-tasting beef, pork, veal and lamb.

But Laffrey's is not just a vintage steak place. They've developed a reputation for innovative seafood as well, like White Fish Oscar, served with asparagus and king crabmeat with bear-naise sauce. When it comes to fish, Thompson is a fussy chef.

"I buy if from the Seafood Company in Boston and have it flown in by Northwest Airlines overnight," he said.

Thompson has a few specials planned for Father's Day, including a 20-ounce ribeye steak, veal chops, and crab legs. Whatever Dad orders, Thompson suggests

he try an order of Laffrey's hand-cut onion rings. They're big and beautiful.

"We're world famous for our onion rings," he said. "They're lightly breaded. You can't beat a hand-breaded onion ring."

Carvers - 24276 Sinacola Court, 10 Mile Road and Grand River, Farmington Hills, (810) 476-5333; open 5-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 5-11 p.m. for dinner Friday and Saturday (band plays to midnight); 4-9 p.m. Sunday. Atmosphere: Dark with warm lighting and nice art. Fine dining. Menu: Prime rib, steaks and chops, fish and seafood, chicken and ribs. Prices: Entrées \$17-\$24.50; Appetizers \$7-\$8.

Extras: Entertainment on the weekends; cigar smoking in the lounge. All major credit cards accepted; reservations recommended.

"It's like this little hidden gem," said general manager Donna Neumann about Carvers. "People think it is now. The lighting is beautiful. It's clean and it sparkles. The dining room is open and there's lots of glass."

Sound inviting? Just wait until you try the food, boasted Neumann. Carvers is a place where the steaks are bold and the sauces are robust. The kitchen

In the mood for fish? No problem. Neumann suggests trying the "fabulous" Norwegian salmon, baked with a light crust of mustard and basil, or the parmesan-encrusted whitefish.

If Dad craves a little pasta this Father's Day, he should try the Tenderloin Blue Cheese Pasta, made with tenderloin tips, penne and heavy cream. Maybe not heart-smart but the stomach doesn't care. Besides, Father's Day comes once a year.

"It is so rich. It's just wonderful. It's instantaneous gratification just to see their mouths water," said Neumann.

And if Dad wants to wet his whistle with something stronger than white wine, he can select from the bar's 15 single malt scotches. Mmmm, mmm. Prime rib, a good Scotch and a great atmosphere... is there a better way to celebrate Father's Day?

Cleveland's Gill & Grill, 311 S. Main Street (between Liberty and Williams, across from The Ark), Ann Arbor, (734) 213-2605; open 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday; 4-11 p.m. Saturday; and 3-9 p.m. Sunday. Entrées: \$10-\$15. A 20-ounce prime porterhouse will be the Father's Day special. "It's beautiful," said

"Oh, it's really good, highly touted by all," said Cleveland. Ernesto's, 4161 Plymouth Road, Plymouth, (734) 463-2002; open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. lunch and 5-10 p.m. dinner Monday-Friday; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. lunch and 5-11 p.m. dinner Saturday; noon to 9 p.m. Sunday. Entrées: \$10.95 lunch and \$16.95 dinner. Father's Day specials include prime rib for \$18.95 and - for the really macho man - a 24-ounce porterhouse steak with Italian herbs and a baked parmesan cheese topping.

Orchard Lake, 27815 Midland (at 12 Mile Road), Farmington Hills, (248) 851-8222; open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday; 2-9 p.m. Sunday. Entrées \$16-\$18. Big, friendly restaurant with lots of pasta, seafood, fish, steaks, chicken and ribs. Their Montgomery Inn barbequed ribs are rated No. 1 by the famous and infamous alike.

Rose's, 201 N. Canton Center Road (near Cherry Hill), Canton, (734) 981-0404; open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday; noon to 9 p.m. Sunday. Entrées: \$7.45-\$17.95. Family-owned Italian restaurant where everything is homemade, including the loaf of bread that arrives at each table in a white paper bag. Steaks, chicken, seafood and plenty of pasta. "Our Alfredo sauce is the best in the world," said Richard of three brother-owners.

Alexander's, 18333 Victor Parkway, Warren, Westland, (734) 328-6410; open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday-Saturday; noon to 10 p.m. Sunday. Entrées: \$7-\$10. Alexander's has been serving their famous rotisserie-cooked barbecued ribs the house specialty, for 23 years. Menu also includes steaks, seafood and chicken. Cocktails available.

Lone Star Steakhouse & Saloon, 18333 Victor Parkway, Livonia, (734) 432-1709; open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Entrées: \$12.99-\$19.99. Known for their prime rib and Cajun rib-eye steak, Lone Star has a special seasoning recipe and serves Texas-size portions. Menu also includes chicken, shrimp, salmon.

Lone Star also is located at 36600 Ford Road in Westland (734) 721-2200 and 30005 Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills (248) 626-2882.

Damon's Club House, 43750 Ford Road, Canton, (734) 207-7427; open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday. Entrées: \$12.99 average. Their meaty St. Louis-style babyback ribs are the house specialty. People come to Damon's after they've tried ribs elsewhere, said manager Jennifer Taylor. The menu also includes steak, seafood, chicken and pasta.

Beaver Creek, 1609 Wayne Road, Westland, (734) 462-6442; open 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Monday-Saturday; noon to 2 a.m. Sunday. Entrées: \$7-\$15. Why not treat Dad to the "Wild Thing," a manly appetizer plate filled with venison, whitefish paté, barbecued buffalo balls, wild boar ravioli and duck tenders? If Dad is on the same side, menu also includes great steaks, burritos and shepherd's pie. And for dessert, try a plate of homemade



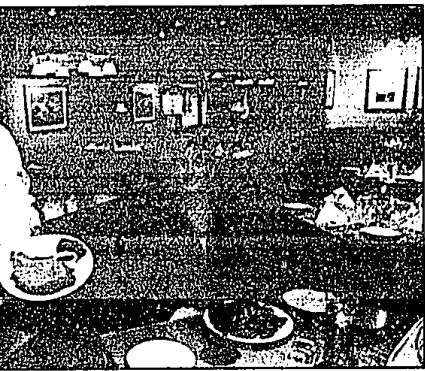
A royal feast: Executive chef Darin Thompson shows off some of the prime rib, steak and seafood dishes that have made Laffrey's a popular dining destination.

chocolate chip cookies, hot from the oven. Full bar and outside patio dining.

Outback Steak House, 42871 Ford Road, Canton, (734) 981-4144. Hours: 4-10:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 4-11 p.m. Friday; 3-11:30 p.m. Saturday; 2-10:30 p.m. Sunday. Entrées: \$8-\$14. Dad can have his pick: the 16-ounce prime rib or a "fabulous" porterhouse, rib eye of New York strip. Menu includes lamb, pork and seafood.

Cooker's Bar & Grill, 41980 Ford Road, Canton, (734) 981-6595. Hours: 11 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday. Entrées: \$5.95-\$16.95. Want to bring tears to Dad's eyes? How about old-fashioned mutton, mashed potatoes, and green beans. Or the Father's Day special: Barbecued babyback ribs and an assortment of draft beers. And if you've never tried Cooker's homemade biscuits, now's the time. Cooker's is also located at 38703 Seven Mile, Livonia, (734) 462-3650.

Prime time: Chef David Reed presents a preview of a Carvers Father's Day special, a 20-ounce slice of prime rib - served rare, of course. Donna Neumann, general manager, says the beef is hand-cut fresh every day.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BAZELER

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Thompson has a few specials planned for Father's Day, including a 20-ounce ribeye steak, veal chops, and crab legs. Whatever Dad orders, Thompson suggests

hand-cuts the steaks every day, and the prime rib comes in 16-ounce and 20-ounce portions and is served with a homemade horseradish sauce.

"I get no complaints," she said.

owner John Cleveland. "I'm not a red-meat eating guy, but, gosh, it's tasty."

The Key Lime Pie, made from key lime juice shipped from Florida, ain't so bad either, guys.

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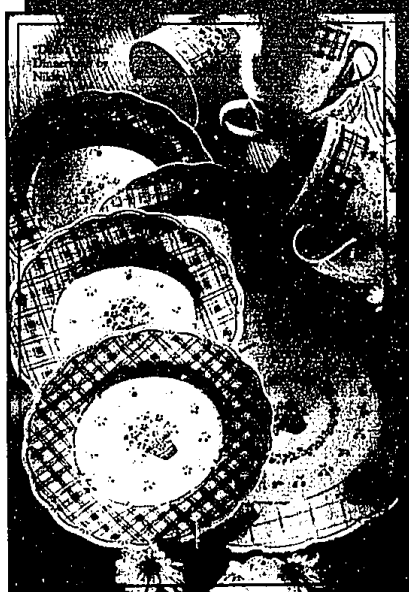
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