

DINING

Amadeus: classic Polish cuisine and classical music

By RENEZ SNOGLUND
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Everybody should dine at Amadeus Restaurant at least once in their life.

With velvet curtains marking the entranceway, street-view windows, a tin ceiling and tables covered in pink lace cloths, Amadeus is ... well... oh, so romantic. Add some classical piano or guitar music — someone plays almost every evening — and you have Old World dining at its best.

Amadeus is small, barely more than a dozen tables, but that's part of its charm. Dining is intimate, and the classic Polish cuisine — dishes like Chicken Paprikash, pork tenderloin and potato dumplings, Atlantic smoked salmon with sliced egg and caviar, and homemade dill pickle soup — is delicious.

Of course the food is delicious. Owner Paul Strozynski learned his trade from the best — his father and grandfather, both of whom owned restaurants and cabarets in Warsaw, Poland.

"My father saw how other chefs prepared food. He was always cooking at home. Everything was beautifully done, beautifully garnished. When I was about 15, I began asking

Amadeus European Restaurant

122 E. Washington, Ann Arbor, (734) 665-8787

Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday; 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday; closed Monday.

Atmosphere: intimate, eclectic, lots of Old World charm. Piano or classical guitar music most nights.

Menu: Classic Polish; well-represented wine selection; wonderful desserts.

Prices: Moderate-moderately high. Reservations: Absolutely. Often booked two weeks in advance.

Credit cards: All major cards accepted.

(Amadeus closed over the holidays and will reopen Jan. 8. Please call to affirm.)

him how he prepared all the dishes.... Always it was my hobby to do the cooking," said Strozynski.

Amadeus, opened in 1988 and touted as one of the five best restaurants in Ann Arbor, is a family endeavor. Strozynski's wife, Krystyna Anioleczyk, prepares the appetizers and lighter dishes, and son Bartek Koss acts as manager and head waiter.

Strozynski makes "the heavier

dishes." Together they serve a very loyal clientele.

"We have some people, especially some of the European people working for the University of Michigan, who come here twice a day. We're like a substitute family," said Strozynski.

"We have the same people coming for 12 years for the same dish. When we see them at the door, we put their orders in," said Koss.

A first-time diner at Amadeus quickly learns that not all sauerkraut is the same. The sauerkraut that came with the combination plate (pierogi, stuffed cabbage and kielbasa) I sampled was delicate tasting with a bit of sweetness. The inside of the wooden barrel in which Strozynski cures his cabbage is rubbed down with honey. "Sauerkraut is supposed to be homemade, not made with vinegar. It's to get sour by itself," he said.

In addition to the combination plate, the Hungarian Goulash and Chicken Paprikash are popular entrees. So are the specials, such as the four potato pancakes served with Hungarian beef stew and a cabbage salad. And the soups? They're a must, said Koss.

"The dill pickle soup is one of the best, and the sour potato is wonderful, too."

Specialties include boiled potatoes stuffed with parsley, walnuts and herbs; the Krakow Special, white sausage with baked sauerkraut; salmon mousse; silver hake filet (served on Friday and Saturday); and the beautifully presented Atlantic Ducktrap Salmon Plate.

Desserts tarts, tortes, eclairs, mousses and cheesecakes — are a befitting end to a meal at Amadeus. The Roasted Hazelnut Torte I tasted was made almost entirely of ground roasted hazelnuts and semisweet chocolate and wasn't too sweet. The glass of sweet Polish honey wine that accompanied it seemed the perfect match.

Guests have included symphony conductors, musicians, and when the Polish Film Festival is in town, lots of directors and actors. Even Marcel Marceau has dined at Amadeus, said



Gracious dining: Owner Paul Strozynski (standing), his son, Bartek Koss, and wife, Krystyna Anioleczyk, provide an intimate dining experience for their clientele. On the table is one of the house favorites, the combination plate — kielbasa, stuffed cabbage, pierogi and sauerkraut.

Strozynski, who at times will don a brightly colored Amadeus Mozart costume.

However, you don't have to be famous or dramatic to enjoy din-

ing at Amadeus. Strozynski, Anioleczyk and Koss welcome everyone with a warm, comfortable and charming Polish hospitality.

"It's hard work, but we love it," said Strozynski. "The beautiful part of this business is that we can meet so many, many nice people."



Artful cuisine: The Atlantic Ducktrap Salmon Plate is an exquisitely presented dish of prized smoked salmon, sliced egg and caviar garnished with cucumber.

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