

EATING OUT

New chef drops anchor at Flying Fish Tavern

BY ELEANOR HEALD
SPECIAL WRITER

No reason to lament "Ain't nothin' butin' today" with the new menu and infusion of a new chef's energy at the popular Flying Fish Tavern in Beverly Hills.

If you're ready to kick back in a casual fish-funky atmosphere, you might want to drop anchor at Flying Fish and give the new menu prepared by new executive chef Chili Rees a try.

Rees came to Flying Fish from No. VI Chophouse in Novi where he was head toque since November of 1998. He has chuckled most for the new fish challenge.

"It's a faster-paced kitchen," he said. "With a tavern-style menu, I can more easily go through seasonal mood changes. The atmosphere is lively and upbeat and food choices are not intimidating."

Rees, who has loved fishing and hunting since childhood, said he likes fish "because it's brain food." He appreciates the flavors and textures of different types of fish and enjoys the challenge of butchering fresh catches in his daily deliveries.

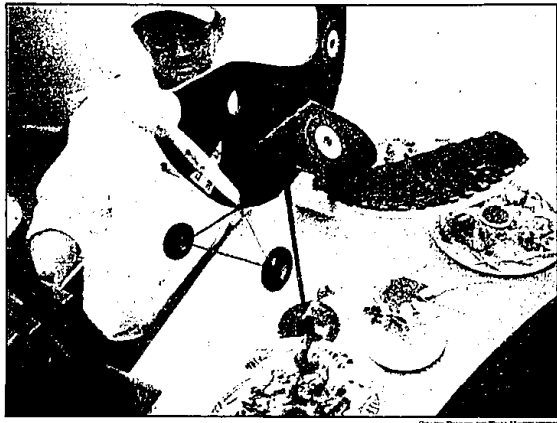
Rees also has a fondness for southern cooking, so watch for these now-subtle touches to grow louder.

New tastes

A tempting array of new seafood appetizers include Steamed Mussels, succulent Shrimp Crab Cakes with roasted corn sauce, Basket of Fried Clams, just like the New England shore, and Calamari Pomodoro.

If you're tired of cookie cutter fried calamari, give these tender "fingers" a try. They're golden flash-fried then topped with diced ripe tomatoes, garlic, arugula, sliced black olives and served with lemon-pepper aioli.

New-age twists on sandwiches include a P.L.T. (Portabella, Lettuce and Tomato) on grilled sour-



A lot on his plate: Chef Chili Rees displays a half-yard glass of beer, Matt's Baby Back Ribs, tempura shrimp, shrimp cocktail, and Thai shrimp.

dough, Perch Po-Boy, sauteed lake perch with lettuce, tomato and onion; and a Chicken Caesar Wrap with garlicky Caesar dressing, parmesan cheese, Romaine lettuce and red onion all neatly packed in a lavash.

Connected with the area's love of Asian, there's the new Flying Chicken Lettuce Wraps appetizer with sesame soy pulled chicken and various sauces. Korean BBQ Salmon utilizes farm-raised salmon with seasonal vegetables and Basmati rice pilaf. Asian Chicken Salad is shredded chicken over fresh Asian-style vegetables with crisp cello noodles, mint, cilantro, sweet soy and sesame vinaigrette.

Standards and more

No restaurant changes a menu and eliminates popular items. Standard favorites remain with the addition of two innovative pastas: Wild Mushroom Ravioli with Sherry leek cream sauce and Smoked Salmon Ravioli with roasted garlic chive beurre blanc.

Although weekly seafood specials abound, Lake Superior Whitefish, the standard on any Michigan seafood menu, can still be ordered three ways: beer battered with fries and cole slaw; garlic crusted with redskin potatoes and vegetables; or broiled with redskin potatoes and vegetables.

Hearty eaters can choose from the Big Plates. There you'll find the likes of Steak or Chicken Fajitas; tavern favorite Matt's Baby Back Ribs (as in Matt Prentice, proprietor) served with ranch beans and cole slaw; or Shrimp Crab Cakes, a blend of back fin crab and rock shrimp with corn sauce, mashed potatoes and vegetable of the day. New in this category is Chicken Parmesan, a sauteed chicken breast topped with marinara, mozzarella and parmesan cheeses served with garlic herb linguini.

Real deal

Now through perhaps the end of the month, Shrimp Fest is the real deal. Two appetizers, Thai Grilled Shrimp or Shrimp Cocktail in a Martini Glass, are \$5.95. Three entrees, each \$13.95, include BBQ Shrimp with cheddar-jalapeno polenta and braised collard greens; Tempura Shrimp with horseradish and orange marmalade dipping sauce and Basmati rice; and Stir-fried Shrimp prepared with Asian Five Spice rub and served with Asian-style veggie and Basmati rice.

For sweet endings try a fish house favorite Key Lime Pie from the dessert menu.

Chef Chili's wish is that you "leave wanting to come back the next day to eat at Flying Fish again."

Eleanor Heald is a Troy resident who writes about dining, food, wine and spirits for the Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers. To leave her a voice mailmessage, dial (734)953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1864#.

Downtown Plymouth restaurants, shops shine 'After Dark'

Do something silly and fun Friday - go to Plymouth where the stars will shine "After Dark" - 8:30-11 p.m. Friday, Aug. 10.

Follow the bright search light to downtown Plymouth after grooving to the sounds of Bobby Lewis and the Cracker Jack Band in Kellogg Park at 7 p.m.

A red carpet awaits at your favorite downtown restaurants and shops where you'll be greeted by Hollywood look-a-likes.

Some stores will offer hors d'oeuvres and drinks, others will have special offers and in-store events.

Paparazzi will welcome the movie stars into town at 8:30 p.m. as they arrive by limo to start the event.

Here are some of the highlights:

- Thai dancers at Little Bangkok Restaurant
- Batman, Robin, Joker at Penniman Deli
- Mafia "Wise Guys" from the Sopranos at Compari's on the Park
- Other shops will have Hollywood themes such as the Wild West at Native West and Wizard of Oz at Penniman Gallery.

Restaurant crawl

Don't miss the Taste of Plymouth's Old Village Restaurant Crawl, 6-9 p.m. Wednesday.

Aug. 15. Tickets \$15 per person, includes tastes of specialties from nine different restaurants.

For tickets and more information, call the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, (734) 453-1540.

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