



Salad, Beef salad, and the popular French influenced desert savorina.

Family serves Eastern European fare in 'goulash' atmosphere

BY TAMARA WARREN
CORRESPONDENT

When Corneliu Nicolaeescu opened the doors of the Transylvania House in March, he brought the Old World to Dearborn, his new hometown. "In Romania, we used to cook like this for weddings. I learned to cook from my parents, and my daughters they learned from me," Nicolaeescu says. "All our food are cooked from scratch." Nicolaeescu operates the Transylvania House along with his wife Felicia, daughters Laura and Andrea, and a modest staff.

"The recipes are original," he said. "Some of the spices and the cheese and the other stuff comes from Romania."

Never mind that the restaurant is nestled in a strip mall. In a short time the photographs of castles, the archaic decor, and the scent of Slavic cooking gives patrons the sense they are dining in eastern Europe. Adding to the ambiance are large photos of the most famous Transylvanian, Vlad the Impaler, the infamous Dracula.

The menu is divided into soups, salads, appetizers, entrees and desserts. Adventurous patrons may opt to try the tripe soup. The tomato salad is a tasty alternative for authentic cuisine.

"The recipes mainly are Rumanian and Transylvanian. I selected the most interesting and different food from the region."

Fish lovers will want to try the herring salad. The pickled chunks of fish are mixed with olive oil, carrots and onions. It's a meal in itself. Goulash is a staple of the eastern European diet, and the Transylvania House's beef

goulash served over noodles is tender and hearty, a prime option for cold Michigan winter months. Wiener schnitzel, or breaded veal named for Vienna, has traversed the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. Sometimes this dish can be overwhelming, but the meal is filling without being greasy and oily.

Other popular dishes are stuffed cabbage and chicken paprikas.



Owner Corneliu Nicolaeescu holds high two of his dishes with (from left to right) wife Felicia, Frida Washington and Mihaela Biebea.

"The specialty is skinned sausages. This item you will not find anywhere else but here with our recipe."

The desserts at the restaurant are tempting. The Turkish coffee is served in a large cup, for those who prefer a strong coffee with a sweet dessert.

Given the family's roots, the Transylvania House features nightly performances by an appropriate figure, Creepy Clyde, who does an endearing monster set year around. Nicolaeescu says Vlad's castle was just 20 miles from their home in Rumania.

To recommend a restaurant to feature on the dining page, send or fax a menu or dining list to Sharon Barger, entertainment editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, or fax (248) 644-1314. You can also send an e-mail (text file or copy and paste into message) to sdargay@oe.homecom.net



Pork chops with mashed potatoes, a very popular dish at Transylvania House.

PHOTOS BY ERIC BAKSHOF/ OBSERVER

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