

Posted: March 25, 2010

Spring brings crop of new restaurants

BY SYLVIA RECTOR
FREE PRESS RESTAURANT CRITIC

Not that we're counting, but we've noticed a whole crop of new dining spots popping up around metro Detroit in recent weeks -- or planning to open soon. We'll be back later with more details and full reviews of some of them, but here's a glimpse in the meantime:

- Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill, which opened March 1 at Great Lakes Crossing in Auburn Hills, is so new it still has long waits on weekends. But inquire about eating at the bar. When friends and I went on a Saturday afternoon, the wait for a table was 45 minutes but we were able to get immediate seating at the giant, guitar-shaped bar. My expectations for food in big theme restaurants are never high, I admit, but that said, I was pleased with the flavors and ingredients. It's a familiar, casual menu of burgers, wraps and sandwiches plus about 16 entrées ranging from ribs, steaks and pastas to meatloaf and Southern fried chicken. Big burgers with fries are \$8-\$12; huge entrée platters with two sides are priced in the teens. Dining reservations are not yet accepted yet. (4698 Baldwin, 248-454-8629)
- After a quarter-million-dollar makeover, the former Jack's Waterfront on the Nautical Mile in

St. Clair Shores is scheduled to reopen soon as Dockside Jack's, with more emphasis on food and service. A spokesman says the entire property has been redone and improved, from the kitchen and dining room to the tiki bar and boat docks. There's a new service staff, a new French Culinary Institute-trained chef and a managing partner with experience in restaurant turnarounds. The new menu will range from casual burgers to fresh seafood and steak entrées. The opening is set for April 2 but call ahead; delays often occur. (24214 Jefferson; 586-445-8080)

- The Wintergarden Tavern in Chesterfield celebrates its grand opening April 1. Described as "an upscale sports bar and gathering spot without the extravagant price tag," it replaces the Easttowne Lounge. The renovated space includes more than 20 high-def TVs, a handsome stacked stone fireplace and mantel, custom mural, dartboards, a pool table and more. The menu ranges from pizzas and sandwiches to entrées. Check it out at www.facebook.com/wintergardentavern. (46777 Gratiot, south of 21 Mile; 586-948-8754)
- Rumalees, an Indian restaurant featuring Mughlai cuisine, opened about three weeks ago in Farmington Hills on 12 Mile in a retail strip east of Orchard Lake Road. One featured item is Rumali roti, a very thin tandoor-baked bread from northern India. The restaurant had been serving buffet style until last weekend, when the kitchen began cooking to order from the menu. The staff is still getting organized, but the food I tried on one visit was quite good. Check the

Advertisement



IF YOU'RE NOT PRINTING ON A KODAK ESP ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER, CHANCES ARE
YOU'RE PAYING TOO MUCH FOR INK.

FIND OUT HOW MUCH YOU'RE OVERPAYING FOR INK AT PRINTANDPROSPER.COM

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

menu and other details at www.rumalees.com. (30701 W. Twelve Mile; 248-381-5449)

- New in Royal Oak are two shops sure to tempt your sweet tooth. Oberweis Dairy (32808 Woodward; 248-565-1071) and Just Baked cupcakes (32828 Woodward; 248-255-1441 at the main bakery) are nearly side by side, in a retail strip on Woodward just south of 14 Mile.

Authentic Thai noodles

Thai food fans should jump in the car this weekend and head to Sterling Heights to taste the six authentic, home-style Bangkok noodle dishes owner Sandy Arpachinda is offering at Bangkok Cuisine in Sterling Heights. The main-dish noodle soups are Thailand's version of Vietnamese pho, says Arpachinda, a pioneer in Detroit's Thai restaurant community.

While pho is relatively well-known in metro Detroit, Bangkok noodles are not. Thai restaurants don't serve them because they require more space and time than other dishes. For those reasons, she's offering them only on weekends, and only in her larger Sterling Heights location.

The aromatic chicken and beef broths are made the classic way and simmer gently in the kitchen in 25-gallon pots. Each bowlful is assembled when ordered, and guests can choose which of the four styles of noodles or wontons they want.

My favorite was the beef noodle soup made with rice thin noodles, beef tendon, Asian meat balls, bean sprouts, and chopped green onions and cilantro. The very large bowls of soup are \$7.50 each. (2149 Fifteen Mile; 586-977-0130)

Roast's extreme coney

Food Network Iron Chef Michael Symon's visit to Detroit last week to film the pilot episode of his new cable series, "Food Feud," put the spotlight on American and Lafayette Coney Island

restaurants. But it also created some buzz for a memorable item on the bar menu at his Westin Book Cadillac restaurant, Roast.

Inspired by Detroit's favorite food, it's the Roast Coney -- an extreme, designer dog created by Roast executive chef Andrew Hollyday and line cook Brad Ball.

The one-third-pound Alexander & Hornung red hot is topped with a memorable, Greek-inspired, smoked pulled-pork chili invented by Ball; garnished with pickled red onions and spicy pickled Fresno and jalapeño chiles, and served in a big challah roll created by Detroit's Avalon bakery. The whole thing weighs a pound and comes with fresh rosemary fries for \$9. It's smokin' hot and -- burp -- delicious. (1128 Washington; 313-961-2500)

A few quick bites

- Tom's Oyster Bars in Royal Oak (318 S. Main) and downtown Detroit (519 E. Jefferson) are marking the company's 25th year, now until Easter Sunday, with a menu featuring two entrées for \$25, plus soup or salad, starch, vegetable and dessert.
- Chef Alex Young of Zingerman's Roadhouse in Ann Arbor is one of five nominees for best chef

Advertisement

The advertisement features the USA TODAY logo at the top left. Below it, the word "AutoPilot" is written in a large, bold, black font, with a blue airplane icon to its right. Underneath "AutoPilot", there is a smartphone displaying the app's interface, which shows flight information for a USA TODAY Meeting on Sep 21, 2009, including a flight from BNA to IAD, weather for Washington (IAD), and a link to a Flickr gallery. To the right of the smartphone, the text reads "The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®". Below this, it says "Presented by: Hampton" with the Hampton logo. At the bottom right, a blue button with white text says "SEE HOW IT WORKS »".

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

in the Great Lakes division of the James Beard Foundation Awards competition. Winners will be announced May 3 in New York.

• Sajo's of Clinton Township (36470 Moravian) has scheduled its final cigar dinner on April 29, two days before the new state smoking ban takes effect. The \$70 price covers four cigars, strolling appetizers and four-course dinner. Raffle prizes include a Las Vegas vacation. Call 586-792-7256 for tickets.

Contact SYLVIA RECTOR: 313-222-5026 or srector@freepress.com

Advertisement

USA TODAY
AutoPilot 

The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®

Presented by: 

SEE HOW IT WORKS »

The advertisement features a smartphone displaying the app's interface. The screen shows the USA TODAY logo at the top, followed by a date 'Sep 21, 2009'. Below that, there are several travel-related items with right-pointing arrows: 'A6 BNA to IAD Landed 09/21/2009 11:48 AM', '73* Washington (IAD) Partly Cloudy', 'View a Flickr gallery of Washington', and 'Articles: Hotel Check in Hilton Hotels'.

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™