

Milton • Means Business

Don Peters Restaurant at Ramada features new atmosphere and award-winning chef

By FANNIE SUNSHINE
The Champion

When Don Chuchmach and Peter Stemman glanced inside what used to be Diana's Bar and Grill at the Ramada Inn, they knew they had their work cut out for them.

The room had been used as a storage facility since 1999 and needed major repair. The partners quickly realized if they were going to get their business up and running, they virtually had to re-decorate the entire room.

"We have all new kitchen equipment, the chairs are re-furnished, we have a new floor, carpeting, tables and fixtures," Mr. Chuchmach said. "We tried to do a nice, country, cozy feeling. I think we hit it right on the nose."

Although Don Peters Restaurant has only been open a short three months, Mr. Chuchmach and Mr. Stemman both agreed business is living up to expectations.

"It's getting busier all the time," Mr. Chuchmach continued. "We do a continental breakfast and lunch."

Mr. Stemman, owner of Wally's Meats and the Meat Terminal as well as former co-owner of the now-closed Steakyard Steakhouse on Main Street, echoed his partner's sentiments.

"It's been wonderful so far, a great response. Customers are very happy something is here now. Milton really needs something like this."

Wealth of experience

The men, who each have more than 30 years experience in the food industry, said they spent about eight months getting Don Peters Restaurant ready for what you see today.

"We're always improving, every week the sales are up," Mr. Stemman said. "Customers are very happy we're here now. We have a top notch chef and our kitchen is state of the art."

Mr. Chuchmach said patrons of the restaurant can expect excellent food, a warm reception and a comfortable atmosphere.

"We're keeping our Sunday brunch. We will be getting into more dinner specials, like prime rib night and pasta nights."

Those specials are created by chef Thomas Flaim, who recently travelled to Sicily, Italy, to receive a certificate and medal in recognition of more than 25 years of promoting Italian cuisine from the Italian Chef Association.

"All I wanted to be was a chef," he said. "I never looked for anything else. Maybe if I had grown up in a big city instead of a small town I might have looked for something else."

After completing his training in Italy, Mr. Flaim took a job in Germany as a chef at a hotel, he said.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Restaurant owners Peter Stemman (left) and Don Chuchmach (centre) bring plenty of food industry experience to Don Peters Restaurant, while chef Thomas Flaim offers an award-winning flair in the kitchen.

After several years of moving from restaurant to restaurant in Germany, he left Europe and headed to Canada, where he landed a job as a chef at the Royal York Hotel.

"I worked my way up as a night chef."

Mr. Flaim took other positions as a chef before recently landing at Don Peters Restaurant.

"I was expecting it to be a little more busy but I see potential here," he said.

When asked if he had a specialty dish, Mr. Flaim said he puts

100 per cent into everything he makes.

"If I make a soup today that's what I'm proud of, if I make something else tomorrow that's what I'm most proud of. I put all my effort into everything I make. You have to make everything the best you can because the public is very demanding."

Although he's won several awards for his line of work, Mr. Flaim said he doesn't believe in competition.

"I like to cook and I like to eat. I don't need competition to do that."

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