



PURE ENTERTAINMENT!

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More than four decades

Stage Deli dishes up favorites

BY ELEANOR HEALD
CORRESPONDENT

In the beginning, it was Bubbe Goldberg's kitchen in Detroit.

That was in the 1940s and '50s. Back then, like any good Jewish deli, favorites were a Dinty Moore, matzo ball soup, hot turkey sandwiches and cheese blintzes.

Table Hopping

And you can still get them at the Stage Deli in West Bloomfield today, along, of course, with innovative deli items.

Current Stage Deli owner, second generation Steve Goldberg, began working alongside his father, Jack Goldberg, in the original Stage Deli in Oak Park in 1962. By age 16, Steve was a manager but he

and his parents had other plans for Steve.

He earned a law degree from the University of Michigan and spent more than a decade as a Los Angeles business tax attorney.

NO GOOD HERRING IN L.A.

Because, as Goldberg jokes, "I couldn't get good herring in L.A.," he returned to his Michigan roots. "I've always loved to cook and even while practicing law, I was taking cooking classes. Once I married and started a family, I knew that I wanted to raise my children in Michigan rather than L.A."

Over the years, Goldberg retained the name Stage Deli, the name given to the business by his parents. "My parents had many friends in the theater business," Goldberg added. His mother, Harriet, loved the theater.

Today though, Goldberg keeps a totally timeless stage theme alive and has added current movie titles to his hit parade of Broadway and Hollywood sandwich names.

NO ORDINARY DELI

Seating 150 at booths and casual table settings in the brick red and ochre-colored restaurant section, Stage Deli takes on an obvious theater theme with posters and photos of stage and screen stars.

Here though, the playbill is an enormous menu, beginning at the back with breakfast items served all day. Popular seating times for this show are Saturday and Sunday mornings. Lox Benedict sound good?

Sure, you can find herring filet in a red wine sauce as an appetizer but Sesame Fried Chicken Fingers with Stage dressing for dipping; tasty glazed Wilno salami with spicy mustard dipping sauce, dubbed as BBQ Salami or thick and crispy House Made Onion Rings are among the innovative "Appe-teezers."

Don't overlook the smoked fish specialties as a way to start a meal. Nova Scotia Salmon comes both cold and hot smoked. The latter is especially moist.

Stage Deli is not a place to pass on soup. Order one of the two or three soup specials or take on the classic chicken noodle or my favorite Kreplach Soup, homemade chicken soup with small pockets of noodle dough filled with flavorful ground meat and served with noodles.

SHOWTIME

Comfort foods create the smash hits among main courses. Many restaurants don't offer this many on the entire menu. Yet, in my opinion, Oscar and Tony awards go to the salads and sandwiches.

Mark Beltaire is the critic's choice salad. Order it chopped and tossed lightly. Meat and cheese ingredients are suggested on the menu but you can alter these as you please.

It will take you several visits to eat your way through the deli sandwiches, numbering over 50, but here are the most popular: Dinty Moore is No. 1 on the list but overshadowed by West Side Story. They're similar, but the imported Swiss on the West Side's pastrami makes the Russian dressing taste even better.

The Reuben is a classic. Rear Window's chicken breast, bacon and avocado is a hit combo.

Havarti cheese and honey mustard dressing make grilled chicken breast award winning in Ian's Top Gun. Fresh, roasted-on-premise turkey breast on Stage seedless rye, with its crispy crust yet soft bread texture, comes full or half with potato salad, coleslaw or baked beans (as do all the sandwiches).

ONLY ONE

Cheese Blintzes, three to an order, served golden brown with sour cream and blueberries is the one dessert you can't ignore. If you're looking for other than Thanksgiving leftovers this coming weekend, let Stage Deli delight your palate. If not this weekend, then soon, because this spot is a metro Detroit gem.

Stage Deli has satellite locations at Somerset North, Level 3, 2800 W. Big Beaver, Troy, and Goldberg's Famous Stage Deli, Twelve Oaks Mall, 27500 Novi Road, Novi. Both highlight the best from the West Bloomfield location's menu.

Eleanor Heald is a nationally published writer and Troy resident who writes about restaurants, food, wine and spirits for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. Contact her by e-mail at focuson-wine@aol.com.

STAGE DELI

6873 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield,
(248) 855-6622.

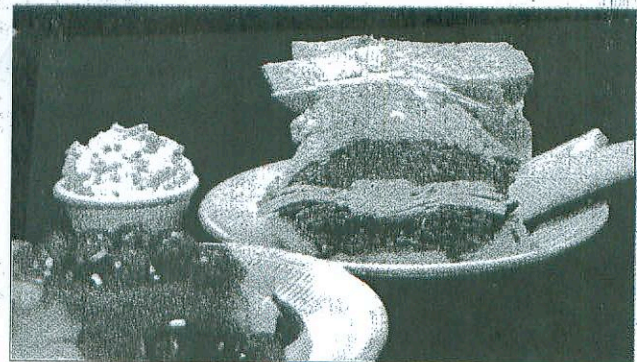
Open: Tuesday-Thursday 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.,
Friday until 11 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.,
Sunday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Food style: upscale deli for dine-in or carry-out.

Cost: \$9-\$16

Reservations: for parties of six or more and call-ahead seating.

Extras: full service bar and tightly edited wine list.



The Stage Deli in West Bloomfield features the Titanic, a triple decker toasted sandwich with hot corned beef, hot pastrami, turkey breast, cole slaw, Swiss cheese and Russian dressing, and for dessert, cherry cheesecake.