



The Diners

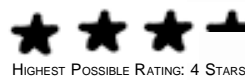
SWEET WATERS STEAK HOUSE

43 Elm Street
Westfield, NJ 07090
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By DR. JOSEPH P. DeALESSANDRO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — As the immortal bard Jackie Gleason once said, "How sweet it is." Truly, Sweet Waters Steak House in Westfield fits this category.

A suitable addition to Westfield's culinary row, the restaurant is nestled among Elm Street's finest site. Sweet Waters is a stately, well-appointed



HIGHEST POSSIBLE RATING: 4 STARS

solid, crusty and welcome loads of creamery butter. Yours truly could enjoy a meal of rolls and a starter in order to be perfectly content. The starter portions are more ample and reasonably priced.

The second act consists of a choice of several excellent beef offerings — Veal Chop, Salmon, Tuna, Cornish Hen and Grilled Portabella Mush-



Michelle H. LePoidevin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

restaurant with a great exterior and bow window seating for an intimate table for two.

The finely-decorated room boasts a large bar. The beautifully furnished dining room, features tables with highly-starched white tablecloths, dressed with attractive stemware and an oil fired crystal candle on each table.

Subdued lighting adds elegance to the salon, which is finished with soft music. The stage is now set for the unfolding of the delightful dinner.

Sweet Waters is indeed many notches above the traditional steak and chop house — and rightly so. The menu, with its culinary pleasures, is respectfully short and to the point. Six starters, including two soups, three salads and crab cakes, are offered.

I can speak personally about the Pears and Gorgonzola. The dish is phenomenally presented and fashioned with Bartlett pears, poached with Barolo wine, chilled and tossed with a warm gorgonzola cheese dressing. The salad is built exquisitely and the aroma of the warm cheese dressing upon a chilled, poached pear is exotically enticing.

The Apple Salad, made with Granny Smith apples, shaved coconut, deliciously sweet onions and ginger, is tossed in a Lemon Verbena Oil. It closely rivals the Pea Salad, in both construction and a delightful mixture of spices and flavor.

The crab cakes, featuring lump crabmeat and subtle spices, is served with a tangy sauce, defying crab lovers to find anything in the crab cakes besides the generous portions of crab. This dish was both a beautiful and masterful combination.

Also offered on the menu was a Chilled Cucumber Soup, comprised of yogurt, dill and mint. The Sweet Waters Lobster Bisque is the restaurant's secret recipe, which I am sure is delectable.

One must not forget the great crusty rolls that accompany one's dinner. Made on the premises, the rolls are

room. I selected the glorious 14-ounce New York Strip Steak. Tender, cooked to perfection and to my taste (which is rare), the wonderfully-aged tender is without the need for anything more. A yummy, yummy meal.

One of my dining partners enjoyed a Cowboy Steak, which is an 18-ounce Rib Eye with the bone. In a lovely piquant sauce, the dish gave forth a fine aroma that tickled the palate. Truly a challenge for the hungry eater.

Sweet Waters also offers a 22-ounce T-bone. For the non-beef eaters, a 14-ounce veal chop on the bone is on the menu.

A Roasted Filet of Salmon, enhanced with coarse grain Dijon mustard, honey and yogurt or a Yellow Fin Tuna, encrusted with green peppercorns and finished with a green peppercorn sauce are also available. Cornish Hen balances the menu with wild mushrooms and black Thai rice and orzo.

As an accompaniment, a very ample serving of French-fried sweet potatoes graced the table.

The final act is as exciting as the others. A killer Chocolate Mousse Cake, boasting quadruple chocolate, was created with the most decadent chocolate I have ever tasted. A Chocolate Creme Brulee is a heart stopper.

The evening may be rounded out with fine coffees and teas, making Sweet Waters one of the most delightful experiences.

The restaurant has been opened for two months and the miracle cook is known as Chef Q. He has gained his experience in New York and at other restaurants, producing wonderfully imaginative gourmet meals.

To evaluate the cost of such dining, one might say that Sweet Waters is on the intermediate or expensive side. However, when you realize the quality and quantity you receive, I would categorize the price level as moderate.

Set sail for Sweet Waters and enjoy the voyage of a lifetime. Welcome to Westfield.



Michelle H. LePoidevin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
WHAT PERFECTION TWO MONTHS MAKES...In only two short months, the free Summer Youth Ensemble has been organized, culminating the incredible talents of string musicians from as close as Westfield and Scotch Plains, and as far away as Hillsborough. Scotch Plains conductor Ira B. Kraemer has donated his time and library of music at no cost to the youngsters.

Free Youth Ensemble Orchestrates Perfection in Two Short Months

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — The string players of the Summer Youth Ensemble stir the basement of the Clark Public Library with the sounds of Mozart, while renowned conductor Ira B. Kraemer of Scotch Plains prepares young musicians from all over the state for next Wednesday evening's inaugural concert.

"You've got e flats in there, no open strings," encourages Mr. Kraemer. "Start together, watch me...ah, you've got it! Let's see if you can do it again."

While the musicians continue to stream in with their instruments, they select a stand for their music. And, before taking their sideline seats, supportive parents bring in bags of refreshments for snacking.

At a time when unions representing orchestra musicians are stifling the art by demanding better venues for their music and more money, these young musicians are performing in a donated space, with the same pomp and professionalism as some of the top orchestras in our state.

What sets the Summer Youth En-

semble apart from all others? It is absolutely, completely and entirely free, with no tuition or strings attached. No politics. No favoritism, just talent and flexibility in schedules.

In only two short months, the ensemble, comprised of Westfield,



Ira B. Kraemer, Conductor

Scotch Plains, Berkeley Heights and other local musicians, was arranged by Mr. Kraemer. Also instrumental in the organization of the ensemble were Clark residents Richard and Karen Hedinger, Jun Chen of Warren, and Samantha Kuo of Union.

Letters to music teachers in area schools were also distributed to pique

the interest of students, seeking a no-cost venue for their musical talent. In two months, a number of kids and their parents have taken the founders up on their offer and haven't been sorry.

But, as the saying goes, it's hard to keep a good thing going — and this is the conundrum facing Mr. Kraemer and the ensembles' founders.

Clark Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paul J. Ortenzio has donated space for the group's rehearsal sessions, Westfield violin teacher Stephen Wolosonovich, and other anonymous donors have kicked in their own funds. However, the group will need to approach private companies and donors in order to keep the program alive.

According to Ms. Hedinger, an anonymous attorney has agreed to donate time and energy toward helping the group incorporate, file for non-profit status, and gain indemnity for the usage of the practice space.

To prove its case to prospective benefactors, Mr. Kraemer captures rehearsals on video to be transferred to DVD. He is hoping that the visual impact from the DVD will encourage donors to lend a hand.

"This was just an idea in the middle of April," explained Mr. Kraemer, "I volunteered to use my music and time to get it started. We began with good attendance, violinists, cellists, violists, and some professionals."

"When I was growing up, kids didn't play this well," he said. When he points out the parts of a piece of music that need further polish or deserve praise, Mr. Kraemer said, "It's good to see faces have a strong reaction to the music."

"Classical music is disappearing, and this is the generation that's going to bring it back," he said.

When asked if he could see the next Midori among the bank of students, Mr. Kraemer said, smiling, "There are several people in this group that, with the right influence, could become professionals."

To become a member of the fledgling ensemble, Ms. Hedinger and Mr. Chen said, "If anyone walks through the door who can play the music, we encourage them. We want the love of music to come through."

Future goals of the ensemble, according to Ms. Hedinger and Mr.

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What Should You Expect From An Evening With WYACT/NJPAC?

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
and MELISSA BETKOWSKI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

NEWARK — The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), the radiant star that beckons artistic zealots, produces a ripple effect beyond its home in Newark — further glittering known celebrities and making new stars of artists from all over the state.

Specifically, for members of the Westfield Young Artists' Cooperative Theatre, Inc., (WYACT), the opportunity to perform there is both a dream realized and a profound honor. For a number of years, NJPAC has opened its doors to WYACT. The marriage has resulted in Broadway-quality productions within a mansion of the arts, rivaling anything Broadway itself could offer.

On Friday, members of The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood staff, along with Publisher Horace R. Corbin, chose NJ Transit out of Westfield for their trip to see the acclaimed WYACT play, *Once on This Island*.

Upon arriving in Newark Penn Station, the original plan included taking The Loop, the Newark shuttle, directly to NJPAC. Advertised as a handicapped accessible vehicle, The Loop was inoperable because none of the drivers could manage the equipment.

The next 30 minutes were spent witnessing the good will of absolute strangers. Under the hot sun, the operator of The Loop no. 30971, known to us only as "Dave," did everything in his power to make the equipment work. A gentleman in a three-piece suit dropped his briefcase, rolled up his sleeves and joined Dave and Mr. Corbin in their quest to get the lift to work.

Despite their toil, in the end, our publisher hailed a cab to get us to NJPAC as close as possible to the opening curtain.

Opening the tall doors to the facility felt like Dorothy prying open her bedroom door from a world of dull grays and entering a universe of vibrant color. Claiming our reserved tickets, we scurried into the Victoria Theater to take our seats.

Once on This Island was everything our Theater Correspondent Kerriann Spellman Cort promised. The costume design stretched the imagination, the choreography was flawless, the acting was impeccable and the music carried the audience away.



Michelle H. LePoidevin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
WYACT'S LEADING LADY...Standing proud and tall, Cynthia Meryl was applauded for her hard work on *Once on This Island*.

WYACT's founder and leading lady Cynthia Meryl of Westfield must be applauded for another amazing job in directing, mentoring and inspiring her actors and her audiences.

Attendees were thanked, after the performance, by costumed greeters. Donning grass skirts, leis, beachcomber straw hats and warm smiles, some audience members were directed to the exclusive cocktail party.

Sponsored by an anonymous donor, the fête was filled with surprises for revelers young and old. Miniature multi-colored lights were strung near a booth offering free Polaroid photos with friends. Mylar palm trees were suspended from the ceiling, brightly colored leis, strewn across a table near the entrance, were for the taking. Children and adults mingled with balloon hats crafted by a couple of artists, and carried tangy punch, wedges of fruit and sweet cookies.

Former Merck & Co., Inc. Chief Executive Officer Dr. P. Roy Vagelos stopped to chat for a while, before grabbing a lei and joining the celebration. Assemblyman Richard H. Bagger of Westfield also made his rounds to friends and constituents.

The real fanfare, however, came when Ms. Meryl entered the room. Stutesque and carrying herself as the star that she is, it wasn't long before she was introduced and applauded for her hard work on *Once on This Island*.

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Natalie Merchant (1963-)

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Take a Sicilian and an Irishman, trap them in an elevator and history predicts that no one will survive.

For Jamestown, N.Y. musician Natalie Anne Merchant, the youngest of four children, this genetic blend didn't work for her mother, Ann, and father, Anthony. But, out of the brewing storm that turned into their divorce, a young Natalie blossomed into a singer/songwriter striving for serenity in her lyrics.

Known primarily for her work as a solo artist and lead singer of the "10,000 Maniacs," Merchant and her siblings were not permitted to watch television. She found an outlet, however, as a member of her church choir.

1981 was a huge year for Merchant, as she was lyricist, composer, vocalist, pianist and keyboard player, respectively, for bands like "Still Life" and "Burn Victims." The same year, while studying at Jamestown Community College, Merchant took center stage with "Maniacs" members.

Twelve years with the band caused Merchant to produce provocative songs like "What's the Matter Here?" with a velvety voice and a carefree, Bohemian style. Her message, like her vocals, fit perfectly in the 80s. Society was developing a conscience about issues like depression, teenage pregnancy and the importance of literacy. Merchant was writing about these topics in songs like "Trouble Me," "Eat for Two," and "Big Parade," all off of the album "Blind Man's Zoo."

While her solo career did not bend the ears of nitpicking critics as much as her years leading the band of Maniacs, Merchant's vocal technique is admired by some of today's chart-toppers. You might hear a hint of her influence in melodies by Dido, Natalie Imbruglia, and Sixpence None the Richer's lead vocalist Leigh Nash.

Although she currently hasn't topped the charts herself, don't count her out of your CD collection. She has toured actively in England, and headlined at Lilith Fair with Sarah McLachlan, Paula Cole, Lisa Loeb and others.

Merchant's "Painted Desert," which she recorded with Maniacs, would be one of the songs I would place on the soundtrack of my life story, and having a best friend who looks exactly like her helps too!

On The Beat Tom Petty Packs PNC With New, Old Tunes

By ANDY GOLDENBERG
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Was there any particular reason I never took the opportunity to see Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers in concert the last 10 years? Perhaps it was because their music tended to get overplayed in the '80s? Maybe it was because they always seemed to be around? Oh yes, I remember now, because I am an idiot!

I finally checked them out recently at the PNC Bank Arts Center and was blown away by their stellar musicianship. Most of the hits were played, "Free Fallin'" "Here Comes My Girl" "Refugee" "Breakdown" "Learning to Fly," and more. As impressive as that was, I was especially amazed at what a great rapport Petty has with his audience.

They also threw in a few interesting cover songs, including an obscure "Zombies" tune, as well as an even more obscure surf-rock instrumental found on a 45 in guitarist Mike Cambell's basement.

PNC was packed to the brim, the crowd having braved a horrible thunderstorm an hour before the show started.

The opening act welcomed Jackson Browne, a main attraction in his own right. He warmed the crowd up,



Tom Petty rocked into the Great Wide Open of the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel.

as many arrived late due to the storm. Browne, a true professional, thanked the crowd for its warm response to his older and newer material.

I learned a few valuable lessons that night — never underestimate the power of pure rock n' roll played with passion and see Petty whenever the opportunity arises.

I'd like to extend a special thank you to the Mitch Snyder Organization for the ticket!

In related music news, Universal Music has been pumping out some great reissues in the last few weeks.

Beginning with the three Tom Petty titles, "Damn the Torpedoes," "Hard Promises," and "Long After Dark." All three sound much better than the original CDs on the market.



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