



Fresh-baked bread



Grazing board

GRAINS OF TASTE

Talking Breads brings local, authentic foods, flavors to the West Shore.

BY STEPHANIE KALINA-METZGER

To borrow a phrase from the inimitable David Byrne, “Piece of mind. It’s a piece of cake.”

To that, I might add a few scones, some delicious peanut butter chocolate bars, cured meat, bagels, bread, cookies and, oh, so much more.

That’s what you’ll discover at Talking Breads, the name a riff on Byrne’s iconic new wave band, Talking Heads. Owners Shana and Joe Amsterdam, who opened their business back in February, try not to take themselves too seriously, but are quite serious about their products, which are simultaneously high quality and accessible.

“We don’t want people to feel we have pretentious products, just good locally sourced items that people will enjoy,” said Shana.

LOCAL FOCUS

The couple launched their original business selling at farmers markets. In 2014, they decided to purchase a property in Shermans Dale, moving in a year later after building a house and bakery.

They said that, over time, they realized that they wanted to change direction.

“We came to the conclusion that we didn’t want to just do farmers markets all our lives,” Shana said.

So, they sold their Perry County property and relocated to their native Cumberland County.

“We bought this Lisburn Road property last May (2019), started construction last October, and now here we are,” Shana said. “We opened right before COVID struck and had to reroute everyone to a pickup window, but we felt fortunate to be deemed an essential business.”

The products offered at Talking Breads will delight any fan of locally sourced goods. For instance, one of their suppliers is Harrisburg’s Elementary Coffee Co.

“We like their light roast from Colombia and a dark roast called Black Rose, which we enjoy very much,” Shana said.

The couple also partners with Good Keeper Farm in Gardners and assists young people in the LEAF program by selling their produce, as well. Three Fold Farm, located nearby, provides tomatoes and seasonal fruits like figs, papaws, kiwis and berries, according to Shana.

Talking Breads also serves as a pickup location for people who get produce from the popular CSA run by Spiral Path Farms in Loysville.

To craft their artisan breads, the couple relies on wheat berries and rye berries from Pecan Meadow Farm in Newburg.



Picnic area at Talking Breads

“We mill them for flour for our bread,” said Shana. Bread choices include wheat, rye, sourdough, European rustic and darker breads, which are crusty on the outside and chewy on the inside, with the French bâtard being the most popular.

“People also love our fruit and nut breads,” Shana said.

Cheese is sourced from Caputo Brothers in York. “We have ricotta salata, aged ricotta, provolone and mozzarella,” she said.

During warmer weather, the couple encourages customers to stay awhile and enjoy an old-fashioned, yet upscale picnic.

“We sell a grazing board, which includes a variety of meats, cheeses, breads, pickles and spreads for \$11 a person,” Shana said.

To make things extra fancy, customers can bring along vases and purchase a bouquet from Carlisle-based Roots Cut Flower Farm.

MANY THINGS

Cathie Jenkins has been a fan of the couple’s artisanal breads since being introduced to the products at Farmers on the Square in Carlisle.

“Having spent time in Europe, we missed the hearty, nutritious bread we had learned to enjoy

there,” Jenkins said. “Through snow and ice and frigid weather, Joe and Shana kept us supplied with their tasty creations.”

She said that she has watched the couple perfect their craft over the years, even going so far as to order a mill from Austria to process locally sourced grains, with some grown on their own farm. Jenkins said that she is thrilled that the business now is closer to her home.

Customer Liz Dete, a twice-a-week customer, is equally as satisfied, saying that the business is many things to many people.

“For my husband George and me, it’s a coffee shop for coffee, a chocolate chip cookie and lingering outside at a picnic table,” she said. “It’s a grocery store for house-made egg and chicken salad, locally pickled red beets, house-made sweet slaw and local granola.”

Dete said that she also buys her cheeses, produce and baked goods at Talking Breads.

The Amsterdams currently raise chickens and cows on their 26 acres and live in the house located behind the business. They eventually want to connect the two buildings and hold workshops and classes and add café seating.

Future plans include planting more fruit trees,

perennials and flowers, and they talk of making their own products for their charcuterie boards.

“Salami is not available locally now because we can’t find anyone who does USDA charcuterie in the area,” Shana said.

“To sell cured meats wholesale, you need a federally inspected facility, which involves a lot,” Joe added.

The couple employs nine workers, and they expect to bring on additional help as they expand.

“Every day is different,” Shana said. “One day, I’ll be baking and shaping bread or weeding the garden or moving the cows. It keeps things interesting, and watching the community come together and embrace us as they have has been very gratifying.” **E**

Talking Breads is located at 1619 W. Lisburn Rd., Mechanicsburg (Monroe Township). For more information, visit www.talkingbreadsbakery.com or their Facebook page.



TASTY, ROOMY

Soul House Café opts for larger digs to better serve its loyal customers.

BY STEPHANIE KALINA-METZGER



Andre Young

Pivot is a big word in the restaurant industry these days. Restaurateurs have been forced to change—and change again—in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Andre Young is no exception. The owner of Soul House Café has learned that, to succeed in life, one must be resilient—a philosophy that has served him well over the years. Each time he suffered a setback, he figured out a way to emerge victorious.

This time, he decided that he wasn't going to allow a pandemic to stand in his way.

When COVID hit, his Harrisburg restaurant was forced to shut down twice, once in April at the onset of the pandemic and then again on Halloween.

It was then that Young realized it was time to take action. So, after five years at 19th and North streets, he moved to a larger location at the corner of 17th and Paxton streets.

"In the previous place, there was a very small lobby and no waiting area, except a deck, where people would wait for their food," he said. "With the cold weather approaching and social distancing, it forced my hand."

TIME WAS RIGHT

Young credits his mother for his profession, saying that she imbued in him a love of cooking.

Years later, when he became a single parent, he decided it was time to go back to school to study the related field of hotel and restaurant management. After working at Red Lobster and subsequently helping to train staff at various locations, he realized that he had a yearning to return to his hometown.

"I was in Norfolk at the time and came back to intern at the Maverick," Young said. "A nightclub operated there in the evenings before a fire took it out."

He then opened Off the Hook on 17th Street, where he served up heaping helpings of soul food,

much as he does today. He ran the eatery for four years, until the Great Recession put him on the ropes.

"I couldn't withstand the rise in gas and food prices," he said.

Several years later, he decided to take another shot at running a restaurant, benefitting from all he had learned over the years.

Over time, Soul House Café became very popular, often with customers waiting in long lines for their orders. COVID, though, presented a big problem due to a lack of space inside. So, Young decided to move into a larger building on Paxton Street, where social distancing was easier and people could duck in from the cold to wait for their meals.

"We closed down during the month of November to make the transition," he said.

ON OFFER

The Soul House Café menu lists traditional southern cuisine, but with many twists.

A variety of chicken wings are on offer, with a choice of sauces, like the popular "mumbo" sauce, which, Young explained, was created in Chicago and gained popularity in the Washington, D.C., area.

"It's a sweet and tangy sauce, with a little kick," he said.

An array of wraps is also available, like the signature whiting fillet, deep fried and wrapped in a flour tortilla, or the Buffalo chicken wrap with grilled or fried chicken, tossed in sauce and blue cheese and served with a choice of toppings. Additional handhelds include cheeseburgers and chicken breast sandwiches, along with sandwiches that focus on seafood, such as the popular whiting and catfish.

A selection of hot subs is also available with ingredients like sausage, steak and chicken.

Customer Dawn Johnson said that Young was a former classmate and became the "go-to caterer"

at her workplace. Among her favorites are the fried shrimp dinner, roasted chicken, macaroni and cheese, greens and rice and gravy.

Dana Blackston has also known Young for years.

"I used to run the Harrisburg Packers midget football program, and he did all the cooking for me at our concession stand," Blackston said.

His favorite dishes are the deep-fried shrimp and fries, the macaroni and cheese, and the greens and sweet potatoes. Blackston also mentioned how popular Young's restaurant is.

"I've been to the new place three times, and each time there was an hour wait," he said.

Marlon Anderson comes in from Steelton to grab and go, with the Cajun catfish dinner being his favorite. "My wife and I both love it," he said.

Anderson likes that every dish is cooked to order. "It's fresh and doesn't sit under a heat lamp," he said. "Plus, the service is good and everyone has a great attitude."

He added that the new place is an improvement over the old.

"It's bigger inside," he said. "In the other place, there was no seating inside."

As for Young, he's looking forward to how things will play out in the new year in his improved digs.

"COVID is making the decisions right now," he said. "For now, we'll do takeout until vaccines get more widespread and the fear subsides."

Until then, he's "playing it by ear."

"You gotta have a love for it," he said. **B**

Soul House Café is located at 1639 Paxton St., Harrisburg. Call for takeout at 717-236-3500. Follow them on their Facebook page: SoulHouseCafe717.

HBG SMALL BUSINESS ARTICLES ARE PROUDLY SPONSORED BY:
Select Capital Commercial Properties, Inc.



Jennifer Stretch & Jane Smith



Joseph Stretch III

JUST DOWN THE STREET

Joe Mama's may be the ultimate in neighborhood eats. | BY STEPHANIE KALINA-METZGER

If you happened to patronize The Loft Restaurant in New Cumberland, you may have wondered what happened to the mother-daughter duo who ran the place that was known for made-from-scratch fare.

Today, you'll find them at a simple, unpretentious eatery on Derry Street called Joe Mama's, where the food is the focal point.

"My dad died four days after we opened The Loft in 2015, and my brother Joe died a year after that," said owner Jennifer Stretch, explaining that the two needed to take time to grieve and heal before they were able to confront the ever-present challenges of the restaurant business.

One of the first things customers will see upon entering the dining area is a large, smiling portrait of Joseph Stretch III, along with his birth and death year and a touching poem reminding mom and sis to reflect back on his life with a smile and enjoy the sunny days ahead.

"He was only 39," Stretch said.

These days, it appears the two are taking that advice and living in the moment as they smile and chat with customers, while preparing breakfast and lunch.

WHAT WORKS

Stretch said that the restaurant business is in her blood. "My grandma Donna Bechtel owned the Dutch Diner in Palmyra and raised us waitressing around the clock," she said. "From that, I learned the hard work ethic, the fast-paced hustle and people skills."

She transferred those skills to a food truck business about 12 years ago.

"We made breakfast to order and roasted turkey, which we hand-carved," she said.

Unfortunately, it failed to take off.

"In this business, you learn what works and what doesn't, sometimes too late," she said. "Instead of staying in one place, we kept driving the truck around looking for clientele, and it didn't help that the truck was old and kept breaking down on us."

Stretch feels more confident this time that she and her mother are in it for the long haul, COVID be damned. "Before the pandemic, we had 13 tables inside," she said. "Now, we have three outside and three inside."

They celebrated their third year in business on July 1, and the increase in takeout and catering has kept everything humming along.

"We worked the whole way through the pandemic," Stretch said. "For us, it was a blessing and a curse. Yes, we have to work harder, and it's difficult to find help. That's a negative, but, at the same time, we're thriving."

Stretch also credits her indefatigable mother, Jane Smith, for standing by her side, working along with her over the years.

"Jen said, 'Mom, you can decorate,' and I ended up cooking," said Smith. "I want to help Jen be successful so that, when I go, I can be assured that she's fine. That's what will make me happy."

SO BLESSED

According to Stretch, the late risers enjoy the fact that she offers all-day breakfast.

"Our cheesesteak omelets are popular, along with our huge breakfast sandwiches," she said.

Also popular is homemade pork sausage that is made on site, along with roast ham and turkey. Sandwiches are served on their signature sourdough, and shrimp and grits fly out the door, along with chicken and waffles. Another draw is the \$5 fish and fries offered every Wednesday and Friday.

"We've had to raise our prices, but we'll never get rid of that special," said Stretch.

Painter Chuck Edwards is a regular customer and a fan of the fish and fries.

"The fish sandwich is big!" he said, adding that the eatery is right down the street from his house and very convenient. "I enjoy everything they serve there and usually order the turkey sausage, egg and cheese wrap."

Michelle Parson, who works at nearby Edwin L. Heim Co., is another fan of the establishment.

"We use them for catering, and what we like is that they make the food fresh, onsite," Parson said. "Our associates enjoy the pulled pork, the macaroni salad and their other salads."

Stretch recently decided to usher in the warmer months with an addition to the business.

"I fixed up the shed and rented it out so that customers can now treat themselves to Ed's Water Ice," she said.

For now, Stretch is exactly where she wants to be.

"I love the fast pace, and I love to feed people," she said. "I feel like it's very intimate, and it's how I connect to them on a personal level."

The mother-daughter duo said that they've been so buoyed by their success that they may consider moving to a larger place in the future.

"We are so blessed," said Smith. **B**

Joe Mama's Kitchen and Catering is located at 2233 Derry St., Harrisburg. For more information, call 717-307-9593 or visit their Facebook page.

HBG SMALL BUSINESS ARTICLES ARE PROUDLY SPONSORED BY:
Select Capital Commercial Properties, Inc.



Donna Zimmerman



NUTS, CANDY, FAMILY

Zimmerman's celebrates a century-plus of creamy, chunky, salty, sweet.

BY STEPHANIE KALINA-METZGER



If you've lived in the Harrisburg area for any length of time, you've likely heard of Zimmerman's Nuts & Candies.

I have memories of shopping there with my health-conscious mother in the 1970s when she wanted to purchase their sugar-free peanut butter and all I wanted was everything else in the place. In our house, candy was pretty much forbidden, except for the Goldberg peanut chews that were doled out meagerly. I have a big bag of them in my freezer today and still only allow myself a few a week—old habits die hard.

When I visited the shop in late February, I was surprised that it looked so much smaller than I remembered, but then again, doesn't everything seem bigger when you're a child?

GENERATIONS

Zimmerman's Nuts & Candies is one of those rare family-owned businesses that has been operating for more than a century. In 1915, John S. Zimmerman began selling candy and homemade peanut butter in his Penbrook general store.

Over 100 years later, Lee S. Zimmerman heads up the operation, along with wife Donna and children Olivia and Christopher.

"My grandfather, who was orphaned as a teen, was adopted by Charles Fishburn, a local merchant who owned a feed mill and would roast corn and coffee," said Lee, adding that John eventually began roasting coffee and peanuts and making peanut butter.



The store itself hasn't changed much over the years, though tastes have.

"Over the years, the dried fruit and nuts didn't support us, so we started adding confections like the Asher line, Swedish fish and other candies," Lee said. "In the past, spiced jelly beans would also be a huge hit. Now, kids tend to go for the sour flavors."

The shop is small but big on variety, from the aforementioned peanut butter to nut butters, coffee, dried fruits and a large variety of candy, like gummies in all shapes and sizes, ranging from Haribo bears to frogs and even octopi. Retro selections include items like teaberry gum, malted milk balls, Dum Dum lollipops and Cella's chocolate-covered cherries, to name a few.

A selection from Lewistown-based Asher's chocolate is on display in the case up front and includes items like salted caramels and almond bark. And if you know someone who is eschewing sugar, let them know that they will find a selection of sugar-free items at Zimmerman's.

Those who enjoy making sweet treats during the holidays may be interested to learn that Zimmerman's carries high-quality confectionery bars and disks made by well-known chocolate purveyors Wilbur and Merckens. An entire wall is dedicated to extracts to add to that homemade candy.

The family stays up to date with trends by making a series of their own items with chocolate as a base. Popular selections include a product called

"Pudge," made with white chocolate and peanut butter, pistachio clusters with dark chocolate, "Rocky Roads" crafted with pure milk chocolate, pretzels and marshmallows and "Harvest Bark," containing two kinds of pepper, pumpkin seed and sunflower seed.

"We use chili powder, chipotle and a little bit of cinnamon to bring it down," Lee said.

When I asked Donna what she likes about the business, she laughed, jabbed me in the arm and said, "I run it!"

With a chuckle, Lee agreed, adding that there's something new to do every day, which keeps the job interesting. The entire family seems to enjoy the relationships they've cultivated with their customers.

"We hear the stories about how grandmothers and mothers brought their children and grandchildren to the shop, and that's nice to hear," Lee said.

Sue Pera, owner of Cornerstone Coffeehouse in Camp Hill, is a proponent of supporting small businesses. She said that her family has been patronizing the establishment for decades.

"I buy BB Bats, Mary Janes, their peanut butter, and I just love their extra-large, salted premium cashews," she said.

Pera also makes homemade treats at her business, which require almonds, walnuts, dates, raisins and currants.

"We buy through them, and they've always been so nice," she said.

SHOP HAPPY


The couple's children said that their parents told them that they were free to choose whatever career path they wanted and that they never felt pressured to work at the family business.

"From childhood, we knew we were staying," Olivia said. "And I think, for my brother and me, we always had many interests outside of work that we would pursue, with the goal of intertwining them with our family business to improve it."

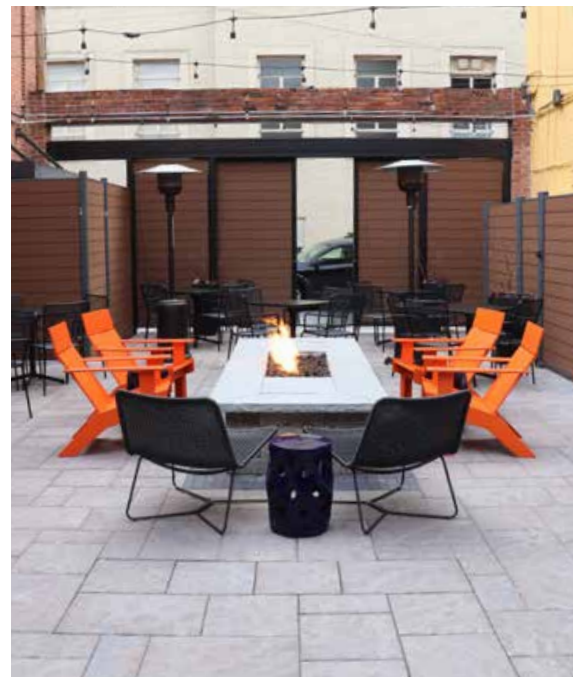
She added that she is creative with the chocolates and enjoys the everyday business operations, while her brother, Chris, is mechanically inclined and loves processing and producing.

"We are both 'makers' whose interests and skills complement each other," she said. "He's the nuts, and I'm the candy."

The siblings confirm that the camaraderie is one of the best parts of the business.

"People shop happy," Olivia said. "They talk to each other. They run into friends and acquaintances, and they leave content. We view them not just as customers, but as people. And we genuinely appreciate them." 

Zimmerman's Nuts & Candies is located at 2701 Elm St., Harrisburg (Penbrook). For more information, visit www.zimmermanonline.com or call 717-232-6842.



Theo Armstrong

SUDS & SALSA

Zeroday Brewing Co. has a new flagship taproom, with Mexican fare on the menu.

BY STEPHANIE KALINA-METZGER

Those who are familiar with the Appalachian Trail may know that hikers have a lingo all their own. I once met a thru-hiker who informed me that her trail name was cashmere. Why?

“Because I’m a sweater,” she said, with a laugh. Zeroday is another word that is prominent among Appalachian Trail hikers. It means taking a break and embracing the idea of doing little or nothing. Theo Armstrong wants his newest taproom, located on the 900-block of N. 3rd Street in Harrisburg, to be just that—a respite for those who need a break from the hectic pace of everyday life.

“Come in, relax, have a great beverage,” he said. “That’s what we’re all about.”

And, to that, add some tacos, enchiladas, chips and homemade guacamole because the new location has a full-service, Mexican-inspired restaurant on site.

FEEL AT HOME

Zeroday’s new taproom/restaurant marks the latest in its rapid expansion.

The brewery opened its first location in Midtown Harrisburg in the spring of 2015. The 5,000-square-foot space, located in back of Midtown Cinema, was divided between the brewery operations and a small taproom.

In 2017, Zeroday expanded for the first time, opening an “Outpost” inside the Broad Street Market in Harrisburg.

Then, early last year, Armstrong announced a major expansion. Zeroday would build a new brewery/restaurant on 3rd Street, near Forster Street. It also would open a second Outpost inside Midtown Cinema, along with a gourmet hot dog bar. For the trifecta, it would partner with the owners of ShakeDown BBQ for a restaurant/brewery concept in the new Susquehanna Union Green off of Linglestown Road.



Obviously, more beer would be needed, so the original taproom would be converted to production-only space.

Then the pandemic hit, and the best-laid plans came to a screeching halt—for a little while anyway. “We started in February of 2020 and were forced to shut down construction for three months,” Armstrong said.

State-mandated restrictions further affected plans for the Midtown Cinema Outpost, which opened late last year, and, more importantly, for the taproom and eatery in Midtown.

In March, Zeroday’s new flagship location on 3rd Street finally debuted, with room for about 150 customers inside and another 60 to 70 in an outdoor courtyard, where a firepit and heaters will prolong the season when the weather again turns cooler.

The spacious and attractive interior—a product of the combined talents of Chris Dawson Architect, Best Space Design and Born Creative—features exposed brick, modern fireplaces and mixed seating. The bar fits about 25 and features a large, eye-catching Zeroday logo and two televisions, which display digital menus.

A separate section can be closed off for parties, receptions, karaoke and other gatherings. That room features a small-batch, three-barrel brewhouse,

so customers can have an “immersive experience” watching the brewing process and even chatting with the brewers, Armstrong said.

Especially charming are separate areas where groups of friends can socialize on comfy chairs and couches.

“We want our place to be like a community living room, where people can feel at home,” Armstrong said.

A BUZZ

Beth Taylor has worn many hats. Some may know her as the person who oversaw the Broad Street Market’s revitalization.

“That experience told me that I can do anything,” she said.

She now runs the onsite restaurant called “La Catrina Modern Mexican Kitchen at Zeroday Brewing Co.” It features scratch fare with selections like enchiladas, fajitas, ceviche, tacos, quesadillas, churros and tres leches cake, to name just a few.

“We think that the Mexican-inspired menu really complements Zeroday’s great craft beer,” said Taylor, who manages the kitchen on behalf of Harrisburg-based Nourish Hospitality Group.

Brew-wise, Zeroday continues its reputation for a diverse tap list, featuring numerous beer types, along with a few innovative experiments.

“We’re offering many different styles, from triple

IPAs to lagers,” Armstrong said. “Sours are very popular right now.”

On tap, you’ll find such Zeroday stalwarts as the ever-popular “Mango Habanero,” a perfect fit for the new cuisine, as well as rotating selections and some one-and-done concoctions. The brewery recently released a strong ale called “COVID Ruined Our Birthday.” Believe it or not, it will remind you of birthday cake, with a kick.

If beer isn’t your thing, Zeroday has a license also to sell Pennsylvania wines and spirits.

“Pennsylvania is producing excellent wines these days,” Taylor said.

The spirits selection includes everything from bourbon to tequila to vodka, liquors that also fortify a new line of signature cocktails that include “Raspberry Gin Fizz” and “Maple Bourbon Ginger Splash.”

Armstrong and Taylor said that the new Zeroday is off to a great start, and the team is excited that they’ve created a buzz in the heart of Harrisburg.

“We are so happy to welcome everyone back and share a beer and a great meal,” Armstrong said. **E**

Zeroday Brewing Co. is located at 925 N. 3rd St., Harrisburg. Zeroday also has “Outposts” in Midtown Cinema and at the Broad Street Market. For more information, visit www.zerodaybrewing.com.

STILL COOKIN'

The Progress Grill's recipe for longevity? Great food, loyal patrons.

BY STEPHANIE KALINA-METZGER

You could say that the Progress Grill has embraced the retro trend inadvertently—simply by staying the same as time passed by.

Upon entering, customers encounter carpeting, mirrored dining rooms, colonial light fixtures and a décor heavy on mauve. And I'd be remiss not to mention the sign. For people like me who enjoy following organizations like the Society for Commercial Archeology, the exterior signage is right out of the Atomic Age and a cool reminder of a bygone era.

But it's really not the décor that attracts a loyal following of regular patrons. Rather, it's the consistent quality of food, which customers have relied on for decades.

HIT THEIR STRIDE

The Progress Grill dates back to 1946. The men behind the restaurant today, Nick and John Karagiannis, purchased the place in 1981.

The brothers didn't set out to become restaurateurs. John said that he came to the United States to pursue chemical engineering. Working in restaurants caused him to rethink his plan and strike out on his own.

"I bought this place when I was 24½ years old, and I told my brother, Nick, who was studying in Italy to become a doctor," he said. "So, he quit college to come over here."

When the brothers purchased the Progress Grill, they kept the name, but changed the menu.

"It included items like pizza, sandwiches and a few dinners," John said.

The two had experience working in restaurants in Maryland and downtown Harrisburg. So, they were familiar with the industry, but perhaps not the pace.

"Downtown restaurants didn't get much business at nighttime," John said of those bygone days.

It didn't take long, however, for the two to hit their stride, and soon they began expanding the menu. The changes were well received. This buoyed their confidence, and they began tackling the task of expanding the physical space.

"After two years, we bought the property next door and put in a new dining room and a new kitchen," John said.

By 1994, the brothers were ready to add yet another dining room and double the kitchen size.



John credits his Maryland restaurant experience for making crab cakes that fly out the door.

"We brought that recipe here and changed it a bit," he said, adding that they use top-quality crabmeat and very little filler. For their slow-roasted prime rib, their first priority is to seek the best quality.

"Then I check the price," John said.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

The brothers credit their loyal clientele and their focus on consistency for where they are today.

"Our customers love seafood and steaks, and it's hard to find a good seafood and steakhouse these days," John said.

If there's anything that has changed over the years, it's the cocktails. John said that the menu used to be heavy on old-school drinks like vodka martinis and Manhattans, but now people want more creative options.

"Fancy martinis are taking over," he said, with a chuckle.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the greatest challenges over the long history of the Progress Grill. It forced the brothers to close for several months. After the restaurant reopened, the customers returned, but the employees didn't, a common refrain in the industry.

Therefore, the brothers today spend quite a bit of time in the kitchen. And, no surprise—the supply chain has posed another big challenge.

"Our food distributor can't find truck drivers or warehouse workers, so that's a problem too," John said.

The consistently bright spot? The Progress Grill's loyal customers.

Ed and Malane Digon live a few miles from the establishment and have been patronizing it for years.

"We like sharing the mixed seafood platter, and we're also fond of their filet and lobster tail, their shrimp cocktail, their cream soups and their desserts," said Malane, adding that the couple celebrated their 60th anniversary there. "We're always treated well."

Dale Kaplan is another regular. He and his wife Ellen patronize the Progress Grill every week, on the same day.

"I call it Thursdays with Nick," he said.

The Susquehanna Township resident said that the food is always consistent, the fish is always fresh, and the lamb chops are amazing. He also complimented the "excellent" customer service.

John said that the secret to running a beloved establishment for so long is to first love what you do, then take care of the customer.

"We offer quality food at a reasonable price, with good customer service," he said. "If you have a recipe for success, you don't change it." **B**

The Progress Grill is located at 3526 Walnut St., Harrisburg. For more information, visit www.progressgrill.com.