

Dancing with the Stars: See winners Jennifer Grey and Derek Hough on Good Morning America

Ship to shore

PUBLISHED WED, NOV 23, 2005 01:40 PM
MODIFIED MON, FEB 20, 2006 11:51 AM

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GREG COX - TRIANGLE.COM

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Ahoy there, Long John Silver! Two new locally owned seafood restaurants have sailed into Triangle waters. And they're both aiming to pirate away some of the casual seafood market with inexpensive seafood that's a cut above the, ahem, fast food chains.

Skipper's Fish Fry & Market, which opened earlier this month at 1001 E. Williams St. in Apex, is firing broadsides in the form of cooked-to-order seafood and scratch preparation. General manager and chef Walter "The Skipper" Bench cuts whole fish on the premises, where he also makes everything else on the menu, from house-cut onion rings and fries to tartar sauce and his signature lobster bisque.

There's a decided New England accent to the offering, which includes oversize fried seafood platters (clam strips, shrimp, and fish -- cod or haddock, true to New England form). For a quick bite, there's also a fried fish sandwich, clam roll and hot dogs made with Hoffman's German style all-meat franks. In addition to the onion rings and fries, sides include New England style baked beans, clam chowder and -- a welcome touch for Southerners -- hushpuppies.

Homemade cobbler, key lime pie, and old-fashioned shakes and sundaes put a sweet finish on the meal. There's even a modest selection of beer (including Boston's Samuel Adams, of course) and wine.



Because Skipper's is a counter-service restaurant, prices are surprisingly modest, ranging from \$4.75 for the oversize fried fish sandwich to \$10.14 for the fried shrimp dinner with the works.

Meanwhile in Durham, **Old Bay Seafood** has launched a sneak attack in Northgate Mall. The fact that malls are retail waters traditionally ruled by national chains doesn't intimidate owner Zed Ayesh, who earned his restaurateur stripes as owner of the Brass Grill in downtown Raleigh.

Like Skipper's, Old Bay Seafood is an order-at-the-counter-and-take-a-number sort of place. But that's about all the two restaurants have in common.

Clam chowder is the only taste of New England on Old Bay's menu whose offering might be best described as something for everyone, with strong Cajun and Italian accents. Sometimes, those accents meld to yield the likes of Cajun scallops Alfredo.

The eclectic seafood offering runs the gamut from shrimp burger to po' boy to Southern-fried or Cajun-fried seafood platters to grilled scallops to pesto salmon over linguine. A smattering of landlubber options include Old Bay wings, rib-eye steak, and veggie arrabbiata pasta. Kids' menu offerings range from \$3.95 to \$4.95. See what I mean about something for everyone.

Prices are modest, with most entrees going for under \$10. That includes the steak and pesto salmon, as well as shrimp scampi, grilled scallops and crab cakes.

That creaking sound you hear is Long John Silver's listing to starboard.

Greg's Hot List: Mall eats/holiday shopping

Before we've even had a chance to digest the Thanksgiving turkey, it's time to break out the credit cards. That's right, this Friday marks the official start of the holiday shopping season, and it won't let up until late December.

Naturally, such a shopping marathon requires frequent stops for refueling. When you get bored with the usual food court fodder, check out these restaurants, all in or near an area mall or major shopping center, for more hi-test fare. This week, I'm sharing my picks in Raleigh and Cary. Next week, I'll shift the focus to Durham and Chapel Hill.

Asahi, Village Square Shopping Center, 1026 Ryan Road, Cary, Japanese/Korean cuisine.

Azitra, Brier Creek Commons, 8411-101 Brier Creek Pkwy., Raleigh, Indian cuisine.

Baba Ghannouj, The Centrum at Crossroads, 2468 Walnut St., Cary, Middle Eastern cuisine.

Bonefish Grill, The Arboretum at Weston, 2060 Renaissance Park Place, Cary, seafood.

Carmen's, Triangle Factory Shops, 108 Factory Shops Road, Morrisville, Cuban cuisine.

Gianni & Gaitano's, Wakefield, 14460 New Falls of Neuse Road, Raleigh, Italian cuisine (two restaurants in one, family style and fine dining).

JK's, North Hills, 4381 Lassiter at North Hills Ave., in the North Hills complex, Raleigh, steakhouse/American cuisine.

Taverna Agora, Crabtree Valley, 6101 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Greek cuisine.

The Twisted Fork, Triangle Town Center, 5959 Triangle Town Blvd., Raleigh, steakhouse/American cuisine.

The Village Draft House, Cameron Village, 428 Daniels St., Raleigh, American cuisine/burgers.

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A rustic and flavorful menu in this Kitchen

The first things that catch your eye when you step inside Kitchen are the chefs' aprons.

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