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New restaurants on menu

BY SARAH MCNEIL, STAFF REPORTER

Clayton — Betsy and Michael Grannis believe fate played a part in finding a home for their new restaurant, Clayton Steakhouse.

The restaurant opened recently, but the couple spent two years preparing for its launch. The Grannises, owners of Morning Glory Inn in Clayton, looked at six locations for their steakhouse, but none quite fit the bill. They were about ready to start a catering business instead of a steakhouse when two building owners came calling.

"Here, after roughly a year, we had given up opening the restaurant," Michael Grannis said. "We talked to both parties and felt this particular building [at 307 E. Main St.] was in our best interest."

Extensive renovations have been done to the building. The space, which can seat almost 100 people, received new floors, handicapped accessible bathrooms, wiring and plumbing, a bar and coats of paint.

The Grannises felt the restaurant would breathe more life into downtown after hours. "In our opinion, we didn't feel there was a consistency in dining in downtown Clayton," Grannis said. "There was one exception, which we believe was a good exception, and that is the FlipSide. The community is growing, and this is one of the ways we can give back."

Clayton Steakhouse serves aged Angus ribeye steaks with a light seasoning, chicken breasts, porkchops and salmon. Entrees come with Texas toast, salad bar and baked potato, which can be loaded with steamed broccoli, sautéed mushrooms, cheese sauce, bacon, chives and cheddar cheese.

Betsy Grannis makes all of the desserts, including strawberry cream pie, peach crisp, lemon chess pie and butter pecan poundcake. "Knowing her, there will be many more," Grannis said.

A lunch menu will debut n April, when the Grannises will offer steak and deli sandwiches, half-pound cheeseburgers and chicken-, tuna- and egg-salad sandwiches. Soups and chili will be available in the colder months of the year.

"For us, the most important thing is a good-quality product and good-quality service at the right price," said Grannis, a member of the Clayton Town Council. "We think we have got all three of those."

Clayton Steakhouse is at 307 E. Main St. It is open from 5 till 9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 5 till 9:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. For more details, call 553-2299. The Web site, www.claytonsteakhouse.com, is under construction.

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Also downtown, Gennarino "Jerry" Gubitosi and his wife, Bernadette, have opened Mulberry on Main, an Italian eatery. The couple owned Casa Gennaro's, an Italian restaurant, in Hackettstown, N.J., for 16 years before moving to Clayton.

"My wife and I have a love for food, family and friends," Jerry Gubitosi said. "This passion to gather together to share our love for each other over a great meal has been handed down for generations."

Mulberry on Main offers traditional Italian fare, including lasagna, manicotti, chicken parmesan and spaghetti. Diners can choose from among eight flavors of gourmet pizza, including the "Sette Figlia," which is named after the couple's seven daughters. Toppings include broccoli, barbecued and jerk chicken, red peppers and pineapple.

All of the sauces and pizza dough are made from scratch and with fresh ingredients. "The entire family, about 20 of us, gets together on Sundays, and we wouldn't eat prepared stuff," Bernadette Gubitosi said. "If you don't make it from scratch and buy prepared stuff, there is a difference."

The Gubitosis want their diners to feel like they are part of the family. "We want them to feel like they are coming to our house," Bernadette Gubitosi said. "We don't want to be a stuffy restaurant. We want them to feel comfortable."

Mulberry on Main is at 217 E. Main St. Hours are 5 till 10 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. For more information, call 550-7400 or write to mulberryonmain@yahoo.com.

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