

Connoisseur

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Hattie's in Suttons Bay celebrates with two "Morel Mushroom Weekends," May 7-8 and 14-15 (the first followed by Mother's Day brunch May 9). The themed morel-weekend menus include morel raviolis and morel-stuffed veal. On June 4, when green things start coming to market, guests will visit a local herb farm, then return to the restaurant for a lunch built around herbs. (Hattie's, Suttons Bay, 271-6222; <http://www.hatties.com>)

Garrett's on Water Street celebrates morels with game hens stuffed with morels and wild rice, and with a lavish dish Chef Garrett Scanlan describes as "morel duxelles in phyllo garnished with morels tempura stuffed with shrimp mousse and sauced with Champagne beurre blanc." Garrett's gets a new lakeside tiki bar this summer, and some transient docking for waterborne patrons. (Garrett's on Water Street, Boyne City, 582-1111.)

Douglas Lake Bar and Steakhouse begins its new season with a four-course "Epicurean Club" menu on Friday nights through spring. The last of the DLB's cooking classes this year is May 18, and a spring wine dinner is planned June 9. (Douglas Lake Bar and Steakhouse, Pellston, 539-8588; www.douglaslakebar.com)

In spring, food and wine festivals blossom, too. Grand Traverse Resort's Wine & Food Festival, April 23-25, celebrates northern Michigan cuisine and Old Mission and Leelanau wines with winery tours and a four-course dinner at the rooftop Trillium restaurant, where each course comes paired with a local wine that's discussed by a winery representative. (Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, 800-748-0303; www.grandtraverseresort.com)

One of the big morel events is Boyne City's Morel Mushroom Festival, May 13-16, with its hotly contested morel-hunting competition from 9 to noon on May 15. May 13 brings unusual model-car races to Garrett's on Water Street. Entries must be made of

fruits or vegetables. On Friday, a morel seminar and lecture at 4:30 will be followed by a guided morel hunt at 5:30. Local restaurants offer samples at "Taste of Boyne" tables Saturday afternoon.

Black Star Farms plans two spring "Pleasures of the Table" events: May 18-20 brings a guided morel hunt by kayak followed by a dinner that incorporates the quarry along with other regional culinary treasures. Guests at a "Catch and Gourmet" weekend June 15-16 will spend the day charter fishing, and that evening will enjoy the catch as prepared by a top local chef. (Black Star Farms, 271-4970, Ext. 143; www.blackstarfarms.com)

A new Traverse City restaurant that has food lovers excited is Paul and Amanda Danielson's new "Trattoria Stella" Italian restaurant, coming soon in Building 50 at Grand Traverse Commons. We toured the site recently, and if the restaurant is as imaginative as the use they're making of the space, this will be a delightful destination. Occupying the ground floor



Record-Eagle/Lara Neel

Ravioli made with morels signifies spring at Hattie's.

of the building's south wing, it will feature dining in secluded alcoves among the vaulted brick architecture.

The Interlochen Wine, Food and Fine Arts Festival at Interlochen Center for the Arts is on May 30 (www.interlochen.org), and the Leland Wine and Food Festival is the afternoon of June 12, with wine from 12 local wineries, food from 10 local restaurants and jazz performances by Ron Getz. (Info, tickets, 256-9971.)

June also brings the debut of "Dining In Dining

Out" in Northern Michigan, our own, all-new "Connoisseur Up North" cookbook and guide to the region's top restaurants, farms, markets, wineries and specialty shops, plus 100 brand new recipes from northern Michigan's top restaurant chefs.

Sherri and Graydon DeCamp are authors of "The Connoisseur Up North," a best-selling restaurant guide and cookbook. They can be reached at: Connoisseur@bayshorebooks.com.

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