



Breakfasts suitable for all occasions

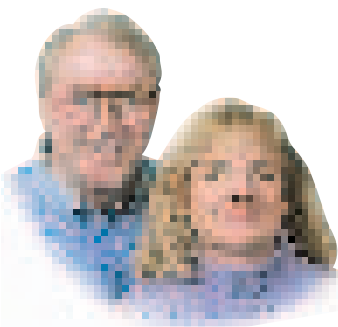
Except for the early-hours, workaday crowd and folks bent on Sunday brunch after church, we who live in northern Michigan don't generally think of breakfast as a "dining out" meal. For a variety of reasons (among them that we really enjoy breakfast fare), we've spent more than a few mornings lately enjoying breakfasts under a variety of circumstances. And we've discovered to our delight that there's a terrific breakfast for almost any occasion.

The cream in northern Michigan's breakfast coffee is the Cupola Room in Harbor Springs, the only place hereabouts that could be called a "special-occasion breakfast destination." Breakfast, in fact, is all they serve, and like good specialists everywhere they get it more than right.

The Cupola Room, in a building on the State Street hill to the bluff above town, is a tiny place. But it glows with genteel charm. Dale and Nancy Clemons have operated it 14 years, and it's a marked change from the restaurant and bar they once owned downstate in Flushing. Dale is the chef. Nancy, beautifully dressed and wearing a crisp white linen apron, presides with elegance and grace over the front of the house.

Seating is strictly first-come, first-served, and the place is so popular that, even on a Monday morning recently, we had an hour's wait. No one seemed to mind. Arriving guests, many of them regulars, helped themselves to coffee in the

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garden. Many read the morning paper at umbrella tables while they waited for Nancy to summon them to breakfast. She greets her guests by name, as she might welcome friends to her home and escorts them to their tables in her charming breakfast room, decked with fresh flowers.

When she recites the menu, it's obvious it is no eggs-and-bacon cliché breakfast. We gladly would have ordered any of the six entrees. One of us settled on peach pancakes, and the other on a dish called "Napa Valley eggs," and the food was worth the wait. The pancakes were light, delicate, soft and custardy — more like hearty crepes, really — and topped with sweet, fresh peach slices. Napa Valley eggs turned out to be a sublimely exquisite combination of English muffins, perfectly poached eggs, juicy tomato slices and avocado, topped with delicate hollandaise sauce and garnished with fresh basil.

Like most destination restaurants, the Cupola Room is not budget-priced. "Entrees" are \$13.95, and extras like coffee, juice and meat are à la carte. For pancakes, Napa eggs, two

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John and Jennifer Fox of Rochester eat at the Cupola Room every time they visit Harbor Springs.

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