

RESTAURANT GUIDE

Winds of change on the region's foodscape

Every summer brings something new to the northern Michigan foodscape — restaurants, chefs, shops, menus. This year's winds of change have been steady, from all points of the compass, particularly the Orient and Italy.

Some are mere zephyrs, such as the news that Stone House Bread's old bakery in Leland, now the Stone House Café, has added American Spoon Foods' gelatos to Chef Martha Ryan's roster of breakfast and luncheon delights.

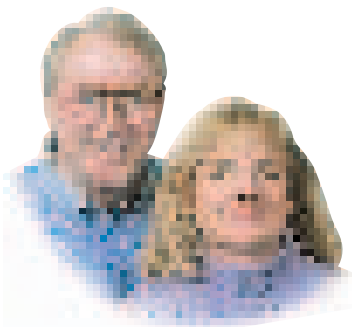
Some are more momentous, like the new bistro named "Hanna," scheduled to open soon in Traverse City.

Here's a weather report on more winds of change. Please note that we have not visited all of these restaurants, and some are not even open yet.

"Hanna" is a new venture by Jim Milliman, owner-chef of Hattie's in Suttons Bay, who expects to be open for business in July. Its location is the old "Firehouse" building at 118 Cass Street, occupied briefly last year by a pizza parlor. Like Hattie's, which is named for his grandmother, Hanna is named for one of Milliman's sisters (he said the others will just have to be disappointed). Milliman plans a preview opening as a fund-raiser for the Free Clinic in Traverse City.

Another new venture being eagerly awaited by Traverse City food lovers is the Italian restaurant named "Trattoria Stella,"

THE CONNOISSEUR UP NORTH



SHERRI & GRAYDON DECAMP

now under construction in Building 50 at Grand Traverse Commons. Owners Paul and Amanda Danielson say they'll be open in June. Their 120-seat restaurant design takes advantage of the historic structure's vaulted brick architecture to provide intimate dining in several semi-private spaces surrounding a central lounge-bar area.

Amanda formerly managed Grand Traverse Resort's Trillium. Paul has held numerous management posts downstate and in northern Michigan for Schelde Enterprises and Phil Murray's Windows. Their chef is Myles Anton, formerly sous-chef at Birmingham's Townsend Hotel. Mari Chamberlain, formerly of Windows, will run the front of the house.

The Italian breeze also brings "Ciao Bella," an Italian deli-eatery on the verge of opening in downtown Traverse City on Front

Street's south side between Cass and Park.

The venerable Rowe Inn in Ellsworth got a new chef, Bud Saley, in March. No significant menu changes are planned, said Saley, who will stick with the Rowe's familiar Provençal-style fare. He formerly was with the Renaissance Club in Detroit, and replaces Todd Veenstra, who has moved from the Rowe to the Galley Gourmet deli at Bay Harbor.

Shanty Creek in Bellaire has a new executive chef, Gianfranco Munna, and food-and-beverage director, Mike McCotter, a veteran of numerous major hotel chains. Munna's experience includes posts at restaurants and hotels in Germany, Italy and Sicily and at Giovanni's and Seven Gables Inn in St. Louis. At Shanty Creek's high-end restaurant, LaVigna, he plans an elegant menu of classical Italian dishes with emphasis on seafoods.

Benzie County has become quite the restaurant destination in the last few years, and the brightest new star there is "The Fusion" in Frankfort, a light, airy restaurant whose menu appears to be an East-meets-West affair of bacon-and-eggs breakfasts and elegant Asian preparations.

Another breeze from Asia is blowing into Elk Rapids in the form of a Chinese carryout scheduled to open in early summer in what formerly was Zagers' grocery and deli. This still-unnamed operation follows closely on the heels of the new Thai-



Record-Eagle/John L. Russell

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and-Chinese carryout called "Indo China Express" on S. Division (M-88) in Bellaire.

If Benzie is becoming a restaurant town, Elk Rapids is becoming a pizza-and-carryout community. Another new operation there since last season is Folgarelli's at Summer's Place, a wine store where Laura Kohl not only offers expert advice, but also whips up fabulous take-out fare. (Another new wine shop in Elk Rapids, named Bear Paws, is also a pizzeria, raising to five the number of pizza carryouts in town.)

The old Elk Rapids Village Office building will reopen soon as an expanded home of the Internet-connected coffee-soup-and-sandwich shop, Java Jones.

The demise of Tuma's on Torch after only one season in Alden has led the town's venerable "Muffin Tin" to move into the café building,

where Muffin Tin founder Jane Van Etten's grandson, Bob Pennington, will be cooking up a menu of salads, sandwiches and soups this summer before he heads off to culinary school at Johnson and Wales in the fall. The Muffin Tin will still be a May-October operation in its new home.

Beer lovers will rejoice in the latest entry in Bellaire, Short's Brewery on Bridge Street. Braumeister Jim Short has a limited menu of soups, salads and sandwiches to accompany a roster of classy, house-brewed beers and ales and, as a bonus, live entertainment by night.

Torch Lake vacationers will also welcome the Blue Pelican, a classic, mid-Atlantic seafood restaurant on East Torch Drive at Old State Road. Open since mid-winter, it offers live music on weekends. Summer brings outdoor dining.