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04/17/2006

A meal of Titanic proportions

Petoskey hotel recreates doomed ship's menu for special dinner

By **BECKY KALAJIAN**
Special to the Record-Eagle

PETOSKEY — When the ship went down, at least nobody was hungry.

Just hours before passengers on the Titanic were to face the most iconic ocean liner tragedy in history, about 300 first-class guests tucked in an elegant 10-course meal.

They were not alone in their gastronomic delight — even the third-class passengers enjoyed at least six courses that night, leaving little doubt that, though chilled and scared later on, the 2,000-plus people on board weren't starving.

Re-creating the Titanic's last supper has been a culinary touchstone for historians, amateur and otherwise, of the doomed ship.

Although laying out 10 gourmet courses amid 14 pieces of silver and



Special to the Record-Eagle/Kevin Johnston
Stafford's Hospitality Corporate Chef Gerald Gramzay, left, and Stafford's Perry Hotel Executive Chef Shawn Heintz will be offering guests items from the first class menu of the Titanic, including the featured entree of Chicken Lyonnaise with Chateau Potato and minted green pea timbale as part of the Perry's Titanic Night.

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several crystal goblets per person appears daunting, the fascination remains "a focal point" for many Titanic fans, said David Kaplan, a Petoskey resident who has been a member of the Titanic Historical society for 30 years.

"Dinners back then were the event of the evening — it took several hours to eat," said Kaplan, who has recreated his own dinners for friends and family. "I guess you could say they ate enough to sink a ship."

And how. Even within several of the 10 first-class courses, there were choices. From the fourth course alone, diners could choose between Filet Mignons Lili, Saute of Chicken Lyonnaise, or Vegetable Marrow Farci.

For those Up North eager to sample a bit of liner luxury, Stafford's Perry Hotel is hosting a five-course meal on April 21 adapted from the original first-class menu from April 14, 1912.

The menu was researched using a book written exclusively about the last supper but was inspired by her friend Kaplan's enthusiasm for the ship, said Judy Honor, vice president of the 107 year-old hotel.

"David had done a dinner that I went to, which was inspirational in itself," said Honor, who decided to make the dinner a fundraising event for the Northern Michigan Chorale.

Like the menu, the table settings will be pared down a bit from an original Titanic table setting. Instead of the 14 pieces of silver, just six will be laid at each place setting. Locating the correct wine glass won't be too hard, either — just three will be on hand for thirst quenching.

Chef Gerald Gramzay has chosen canapé ala Admiral shrimp, cream of barley soup, chilled asparagus with Champagne saffron vinaigrette, sautéed chicken Lyonnaise and minted pea timbales, and a Waldorf pudding that Honor says is "marvelous."

Planning the menu was easy, said Honor, but locating one of the Edwardian-era ingredients wasn't so.

"They had saffron threads on the salad, but the chef couldn't locate any," she said of the pricey spice that goes for about \$28 per half-ounce. Gramzay will use crimson sprouts as a substitute instead.

Honor said that the menu was pared to five courses in the interest of time and in consideration of modern diners' appetites. A century ago, elegant dinners lasted hours and courses were modest — a few bites at best, she said.

Though the white linens will echo those used on board, the china, crystal and silver will be of hardier stock, said Honor.


"The china was signature — top quality — and you certainly couldn't put that through the dishwasher," she said, "not to mention polishing all of that silver and hand-washing that crystal? No, thanks."

Just as there was on the Titanic's final evening, there will be music to

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11	11,460
1	11,445
3	11,430
	11,415
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entertain the diners. Members of the 80-person chorale will sing selections from "Songs of the Sea," the group's spring program.

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For tickets to the April 21 dinner, call 347-4000. Cash bar is at 6 p.m., with seating beginning at 6:45 p.m. and dinner served at 7. Tickets are \$50 and include admission to the chorale's spring program on Sunday, April 23, at 7:30 p.m. at Crooked Tree Arts Center.

The following dishes were served as part of the last meal on the Titanic.

Cream of Barley Soup

1 T. vegetable oil
 1/4 c. finely chopped salt pork or bacon
 2 each: carrots and onions, finely chopped
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 bay leaf
 2 t. coarsely chopped parsley stems
 1/4 t. peppercorns
 1 c. pearl barley
 7 c. beef or other meat stock
 1 c. whipping cream
 2 T. whiskey
 1 T. red wine vinegar
 Salt and pepper

In large pot, heat oil over medium heat, add salt pork and cook, stirring often, for two minutes. Stir in carrots, onions and garlic; cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until vegetables are very soft.

Meanwhile, wrap bay leaf, parsley stems and peppercorns in cheesecloth, fold over and tie to make bouquet garni. Stir barley into vegetable mixture, cook, stirring, for about 45 seconds. Pour in stock and add bouquet garni. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for 40 to 45 minutes or until barley is tender.

Remove from heat; in blender or food processor, puree soup in batches until almost smooth. Transfer to clean pot, cook over medium heat until steaming. Whisk in cream, whiskey and vinegar. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Do not boil. Makes six to eight servings.

Chicken Lyonnaise

1/3 c. all-purpose flour
 2 T. chopped fresh thyme (1 T. dried)
 1/2 t. each: salt and pepper
 6 boneless chicken breasts
 1 egg, beaten
 3 T. vegetable oil
 2 onions, thinly sliced
 1 clove garlic, minced
 1/3 c. white wine
 1 c. chicken stock
 2 t. tomato paste

Pinch granulated sugar

In sturdy plastic bag, shake together flour, 1 T. of the thyme (or 1&1/2 t. if using dried), salt and pepper. One at a time, dip chicken breasts into egg, and then shake in flour mixture.

In large deep skillet, heat 2 T. vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Place chicken in pan, skin side down. Cook, turning once, for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from skillet and place in 225-degree oven.

Reduce heat to medium, add remaining oil to skillet. Stir in onions, garlic and remaining thyme; cook, stirring often, for five minutes or until onions are translucent. Increase heat to medium-high and continue to cook onions, stirring often, for five minutes or until golden brown.

Add wine to pan; cook, stirring, to scrape up any brown bits, for about a minute or until reduced by half. Stir in stock, tomato paste and sugar. Boil for two minutes or until beginning to thicken. Return chicken to pan, turning to coat, and cook for five minutes or until juices from chicken run clear. Makes six servings.

Chateau Potatoes

6 medium potatoes
 2 T. unsalted butter
 1 T. vegetable oil
 1 T. finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves
 1/2 t. each: salt and pepper

Peel potatoes; using a turning knife, cut into eight-sided jewel shapes (or cut into thick, evenly shaped wedges). Meanwhile, place butter, oil and rosemary in large rimmed baking sheet. Set pan in 425-degree oven for 2 to 3 minutes or until butter is sizzling. Pat potatoes dry. Place in heated pan and stir to coat with butter mixture. Bake in 425-degree oven, stirring occasionally, for 35 to 40 minutes or until potatoes are golden brown. Season with salt and pepper. Makes six servings.

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