

Prestonwood eateries offer menu mix, family atmosphere

By Ron Page

Planning to eat out or maybe order take-out tonight? If you live in the Preston area, you've got a lot of choices. It was planned that way.

Location and convenience played a major role in designing Preston Corners at High House Road and Cary Parkway, according to Marvin Waldo of Kane Realty in Raleigh. The man who compiled the tenants for the shopping center said he had a laundry list of inquiries from restaurants. "Our number one objective was to find those tenants we felt had the traits to make it—multiple operations, family dining, with good products and fairly priced."

One and one-half miles west at the Cornerstone Shopping Center where High House meets Davis Drive, the same was true. Overall, 15 places where food or drink can be obtained have either opened or are about to open in the Preston area. In every instance, convenience for the customer has been a paramount consideration.

For instance: There are more than 7,000 Pizza Hut restaurants across the nation, but none like the new one just opened at Preston Corners.

"It's a new concept for the company," explains Don Hensley, regional vice president for Pizza Hut. "First off, we wanted a site at one of the corners, but they had all been sold. So we went with an in-line operation, which means we located our business within the shopping center itself in line with other shops."

Hensley explains that for the first time visitors will find a complete Pizza Hut Restaurant with its own kitchen and next to it a complete Pizza Hut take-out store, also with its own kitchen. The restaurant has a full lunch menu and a lunch buffet, while the delivery store offers pizza, breadsticks and hot wings. "It's the first time we've ever had this type of operation," he said.

Pizza Hut opened a little more than a month ago, and Hensley said Preston was selected not only because it's a nice neighborhood, but also because of Cary's overall growth, and the eventual development and completion of Cary Parkway. "The location obviously has a lot to offer," he said. Hours are Sunday through Thursday 11 a.m. to midnight, Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. 380-3005.

By far the largest restaurant in the Preston area is Jasper's on Cary Parkway, where some 220 diners can enjoy what Manager Kevin Ingram describes as signature American food. The polished wood and hanging lighting fixtures offer an upscale but casual atmosphere, with seating at both tables and booths which line windowed walls.

Jasper's opened 15 months ago, and it has enjoyed constantly strong business, offering a range of appetizers, salads, sandwiches and a full range of entrees. A favorite is Hawaiian ribeye, as well as a homemade potato soup. Hours are 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Branch is available Sunday from 10:30 a.m. 319-3400.

Mrs. Gray's Gourmet Foods at Cornerstone Shopping Center is a family-owned coffee house with some 60 varieties of both regular and decaf coffee. Coffee beans are also for sale. Owned by Deanna and Kevin Helmer (Gray is Mrs. Helmer's maiden name), who came from California and now live in Preston, the store features a variety of baked goods. They also sell collectible items such as teapots and mugs.

Mrs. Gray's opened Jan. 6. Classical stereo plays in the background. Board games are available and there is seating for about 30 persons.

"When we came here we found breakfast items difficult to find," says Mrs. Helmer, "so we offer a variety from cinnamon rolls to muffins and coffee cakes, berry crumbcakes, and a flourless crumb cake." Hours 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. 462-3340.

The aroma of fresh, homemade dough baking greets visitors at Mancino's Pizza & Grinders in the Cornerstone Shopping Center. Owner Terry Rudd and his son, Brian, who is manager, opened this stylish shop December 15, and Rudd says business has been great.

"We pride ourselves in making fresh dough every day," says Rudd, who adds the concept of a pizza and grinder store that actually makes its dough from scratch was started in the midwest in the late 1930s by Samuel Mancino Sr. and

some 80 Mancino's are now in operation. Rudd said what started as a family business mushroomed when investors were allowed to participate.

So what's in a grinder? It starts with a homemade Italian roll, about 18 inches long. A generous portion of meats (about a half-pound) are piled on the roll, topped with fresh vegetables (peppers, onions, or mushrooms) and a blend of five different cheeses. The open-faced grinder is then baked with the melted "bubbly" cheese on one side and the meats and vegetables on the other. Tomatoes and lettuce are then placed atop and the creation is brought together.

The Cornerstone store has about 21 employees, most of them students. Hours are Monday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday noon to 7 p.m. 461-6775.

One of the busiest spots is Manhattan Bagels at Preston Corners where Scott and Janet Smith opened their franchise in August last year. The Smiths live in Preston and so sure were they of the location, they signed a lease for the shopping center site from the rental agency before they even got the franchise.

"We've been in Preston since 1985 and knew how the area was growing," said Mrs. Smith. "The shopping center was filled with tenants before construction even started and we were the first store to open."

Eighteen varieties of bagels are offered, as well as two cinnamon specialties. The place seats 18 inside and about 40 overall when the outside umbrella tables can be used. There's a self-serve coffee bar with free refills. Eighteen different flavors are offered.

The ovens go on at 4 a.m. and the doors open at 6 a.m., with peak hours from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Six full-time and eight part-time employees are used. 319-5225.

The pioneer dining spot of both areas is McDonald's Restaurant and Drive-in at Preston Corners. The store became the area's first eating establishment when it opened two and a half years ago. Kevin Amwood is manager. As-



FOR THE HEARTY APETITE—Mancino's is famous for its grinders, 18-inch long sandwiches filled with generous portions of meat topped with cheese and fresh vegetables. Restaurant owner Terry Rudd, at left, and son, Brian, manager, show off one of their creations.

sistant Manager Charles Rinaldi said the store is basically designed as McDonald's look of the future. "The big, flashy look is replaced at this location by a more streamlined, very bright and cheerful appearance," he said. Since opening, a major part of the business has been from the area's labor force, landscapers and contractors, but Rinaldi said the population increase in Preston is showing change. "We expect the majority of future business to tend towards families," he said. "The kids love what we call our 'Happy Meal' which includes a toy for each of them." Hours are Monday through Saturday 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Sunday 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. 481-1500.

Authentic Mexican food is offered at El Dorado which opened last November at Preston Corners. Cozy with wood paneling and booth seats, the place is owned by the Isabel Ayala family which also has other sites in Raleigh, Fuquay-Varina, Garner and Durham. Ayala's son, Isoprodro, says the family is from Mexico but lived in California before moving to Raleigh and opening a restaurant in

ing of Cary. The place is open Monday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday noon to 10 p.m. 481-4447.

Jersey Mike's has been doing a heavy business since opening at Preston Corners last October. Manager is Stan Marin and the assistant manager is Jeremy Glenn. The restaurant has eight 4-seat tables, and also enjoys a strong take-out business for its 25 different types of submarine sandwiches, both hot and cold. Hours are Monday to Wednesday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Thursday and Friday 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Sunday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. 461-0660.

China Gate, owned by Joanna Alexy of Cary, has been open only a few months at Preston Corners, offering a full range of beef, fowl, seafood, tofu and vegetarian Chinese cuisine. Popular dishes range from Mongolian beef, and sweet and sour fish, to pineapple chicken, plum duck, to pillow tofu. Hours are 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for lunch Sunday through Thursday and 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. for dinner, 11

a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for lunch Friday, 4 to 10 p.m. for dinner, and 4 to 10 p.m. for dinner Saturday. 319-1818.

Preston resident Mike Nichols opened Jitters Espresso late last year, and a steady clientele has developed for take-out as well as in-house service. Three basic espresso-based drinks are offered at this Preston Corners coffee house: mocha, which has a shot of espresso, a shot of steamed milk, and chocolate syrup topped with whipped cream; cappuccino, which has one-third espresso, one-third steamed milk and one-third frothed milk; and latte, which is basically the same as cappuccino but with more steamed milk and less frothed milk.

The hours are Monday through Thursday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. 462-3320.

The new Preston Business Center on Cary Parkway includes Caribou Coffee and Bruegger's Bagel Bakery. Papa John's Pizza will be opening at a later date. A separate article on the center is included in this month's Progress.

Michael S. Watson, D.D.S.

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PUBLIC HEARING
WAKE COUNTY 1996 ACTION PLAN

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT Wake County is in the process of preparing its 1996 Action Plan which is a component of the 5-year Consolidated Plan required to receive funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The 1996 Action Plan describes the activities to be carried out during Fiscal Year 1996. It is the second part of a 5-year strategy to meet the County's housing goals as identified in the Consolidated Plan.

In order to prepare an effective plan, the County needs to involve the public. To achieve this, Wake County will hold the following public hearing:

DATE AND TIME Monday, March 4, 1996 7:00pm	LOCATION Luther Green Community Center 922 North Church Street Morrisville, NC
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The purpose of the public hearing is to receive oral or written comments on housing needs, community environment and economic opportunities throughout Wake County, particularly for persons with low- and moderate-incomes. Wake County's Action Plan includes the towns of Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Morrisville, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell, Zebulon and the unincorporated areas of the County.

For more information, please contact Annemarie Maiorano in the Wake County Human Services Department at (919) 856-5268. Speech or hearing impaired persons may contact 1-800-735-2962 (TT) or 1-800-735-8262 (voice).