

epicurean *Greg Cox dishes on local restaurant news.*

Clayton's new Skylines

Tina Bolick worked for 21 years in the restaurant business before opening her own restaurant. When her big opportunity finally came, she made the best of her extensive experience, which includes work at several Triangle restaurants specializing in American and regional American cuisines (among them Darryl's, 42nd St. Oyster Bar, Glenwood Grill and Lucky 32). Like those restaurants, Skylines Café (8878-100 U.S. Hwy. 70 West; 550-7619), which Bolick opened in March in the old Allium Bistro spot, celebrates the flavors and cultures of America.

Chef Sean Batchelor's menu spans the continent, from Baltimore crab cakes to San Francisco melt, and covers a whole lot of territory in between: Southwestern chicken, baked tilapia with a tropical pineapple salsa, Midwestern-style baby back ribs and peppercorn sirloin, to name a few. The lunchtime menu reads like a list of all-time favorite diner classics, from chicken salad plate to club sandwich to meatloaf with mashed potatoes. Fittingly, the wine list favors American labels, and desserts — all homemade — include the likes of key lime pie and three-berry pie.

But Skylines Café's celebration doesn't stop with the food. The dé-

cor, whose focal point is a series of glass panels dividing the dining room and bar, which are etched with the skylines of major American cities, is itself a tribute to Americana. A sheltered patio makes the best of our temperate Carolina weather. And prices, which range from \$9 to \$18, are something any red-blooded American can appreciate.

Also in Clayton, Beth Charnetzky has opened Good Times Café & Tavern (217 E. Main St.; 550-0623) in the spot most recently occupied by Good Day Café. Don't let the similarity of the names fool you. Good Times Café, a casual (and kid-friendly) eatery that serves up sandwiches and traditional American fare with a side of live entertainment Wednesday-Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons is in no way affiliated with Good Day Café.

Change in management notwithstanding, the new restaurant does preserve one feature of the old one: blue cheese potato chips with red pepper jelly. Turns out the appetizer was so popular among the locals, people were stopping by even before the new restaurant had opened and asking Charnetzky to include it on her menu. She wisely consented, and you'll find the addictive snack on Good Times Café's list of "Open-

ing Acts," along with the likes of beer-battered mushrooms, chili cheese fries and fried pickles. If you're still hungry, you can select from "Main Attractions," an assortment of sandwiches including Philly cheese steak, half pound burger, fresh veggie wrap, and a variation on the Reuben theme called The Mighty Quinn. Hungrier still? Opt for the daily special, which ranges from Tuesday's chicken breast stuffed with roasted red peppers and mozzarella to prime rib on the weekends.

Brunch for Mom

Got your card and flowers for Mom yet? You did remember that this Sunday is Mother's Day, didn't you? If you really want to show Mom how much you appreciate all she's done for you, treat her to a meal at one of these restaurants. If ever there was a day when she shouldn't have to cook, this is it.

Mother's Day being one of the busiest days of the year for restaurants, you shouldn't have any trouble finding lots of choices. One caveat, though: area universities often schedule graduation weekend to coincide with Mother's Day, so many of the best restaurants fill up fast. It's a good idea to get reservations if possible.