

CULINARY *Corner*

Marston's

151 E. Walnut St., Pasadena
(626) 796-2459



Sue STAUFFER

If you have not eaten at Marston's, you are missing a great breakfast place, a fantastic lunch location and a wonderful place to dine all rolled into one.

This craftsman-style bungalow always has eager people waiting outside on the front porch which is proof of this restaurant's popularity. Chef Jim McCarty knows how to tempt the palate with an enticing selection of breakfast entrees. How about French toast coated with corn flakes and grilled to perfection? A tempting selection of pancakes, ranging from blueberry, macadamia nut and seven-grain, are served with real maple syrup.

For the traditionalist, the hot oatmeal is reminiscent of Grandma's offering, but she never put together such a delicious selection of condiments to dress it up.

For lunch, the salads at Marston's are terrific. Probably the most popular is the Pasadena Salad, an appetizing combination of fresh spinach, avocado, chicken breast, scallions and bacon topped with caramelized pecans.

McCarty's favorite is the Cordiera salad with grilled sesame chicken breast atop romaine lettuce, tossed with green and black olives, bacon avocado, tomatoes, blue cheese and candied pecans, and dressed with Marston's famous San Pasqual dressing. The California orange salad with chicken breast, mandarin oranges, avocado, raisins, green onions, blue cheese, apples and candied pecans is also wonderful.

For sandwiches, one can choose from the tempting tuna tortilla roll, fish tacos, spicy salmon, or a mouth-watering traditional Reuben. The smoked salmon club is another great choice for a sandwich and it offers a nice combination of flavors. The B&B is hearty and delicious with a combination of sliced tri-tip

grilled on sourdough bread with cheddar cheese and tomato.

Marston's makes a great hamburger, too. You can choose from the hickory burger, avocado bacon burger, mushroom burger, Texas chili burger, or there is a vegetarian burger.

If you can't make breakfast or lunch at Marston's, then don't miss dinner when McCarty really goes to town. Probably the most popular entrée is the beef tenderloin stuffed with wild mushrooms and Gorgonzola cheese. Include thyme roasted chicken breast, Red Snapper fish tacos, Arctic char, sea scallops and chicken pot pie.

Marston's classics are always winners, so don't miss the smoked chicken macaroni and cheese or the chicken linguine with artichokes, sun-dried tomatoes, goat cheese and mushrooms. Save room for dessert with Marston's famous bread pudding, which tops our favorites list. Also delicious is the red velvet cake with cream cheese frosting and the warm apple pie with vanilla ice cream.

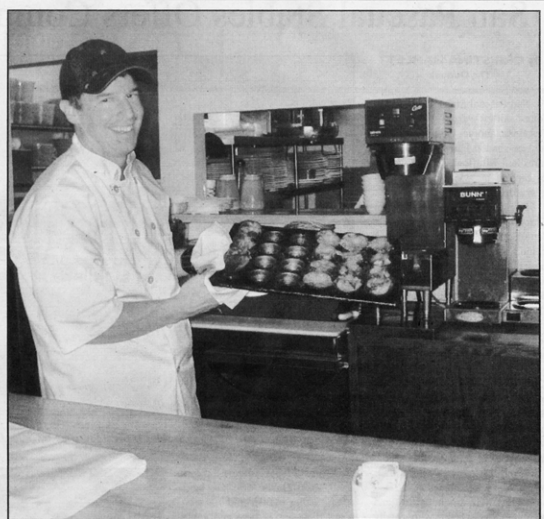
There is a nice wine list to choose from, the perfect pairing to accompany your meal, as well as choices of beer if you prefer an adult beverage.

Reservations are suggested as the restaurant is small and has a group of regulars. Marston's has a 10-week rotation of art from the California Art Club, Pasadena Art Colony. The restaurant also does catering and the place is available for private parties.

For upcoming events, visit www.marstonsrestaurant.com. Parking is available in the lot adjacent to the restaurant or on the street.

Marston's is open for breakfast from 7 to 11 a.m. Monday through Friday. Lunch is available from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Dinner goes from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. daily.

Read "Heads Up!" and more restaurant reviews and chef interviews at www.columnsstaffer.com.



Marston's offers "a mix that includes regional recipes together with the old standbys that Americans enjoy," says chef Jim McCarty.

McCarty Prepares American Classics at Marston's

Jim McCarty got his start in the restaurant business while working at Reflections (now Dish) in La Cañada Flintridge.

He was a student at La Cañada High School at the time, and it was the perfect part-time job. Like many good chefs in the restaurant business, McCarty worked his way up the line, taking on more and more responsibility as he increased his knowledge about the preparation of food.

After graduation, McCarty headed for San Diego State to study graphic design. He found a job at one of the top restaurants in the area, The Cove, located in La Jolla. When the chef at The Cove moved to Dobson's, McCarty followed him and continued working and learning until he graduated from college and returned to La Cañada Flintridge.

His continued his culinary education at Christopher's restaurant on Raymond Avenue. He then worked at Juliennes and Café Santorini before going to the Ojai Valley Inn, where he met Otis and Sally Marston.

The Marstons were frequent guests at the Valley Inn and started discussing a restaurant venture with McCarty, who was interested in purchasing it.

The Marstons both had a passion for creativity. Sally's passion was planting gardens and Otis loved to create innovative and delicious cuisine, which led them to open

Marston's Restaurant in 1988.

McCarty purchased the restaurant in 2000 and has continued the warm, cozy atmosphere and excellent cuisine for which the restaurant has always been known.

"I have a very loyal and capable staff," McCarty said. "They are on a first-name basis with many of our regulars, so we have a very friendly and family-oriented atmosphere. We try to take excellent care of our customers and want them to feel like they are dining in the home of a family member or good friend."

He added: "Our 'little house' reminds many people of their grandmother's house. As the chief-owner of Marston's, I strive to bring classic American cuisine with the freshest ingredients, simply prepared and perhaps introducing an unexpected ingredient for a surprising new flavor. I still have some of Otis Marston's popular favorites on the menu like his cheddar cheese popovers and macadamia nut pancakes. We want our guests to have memorable meals and always get exactly what they are expecting from the menu."

McCarty noted that American cooking today is the product of many factors: native inventiveness, indigenous foods, immigrant's recipes, modern technology and national pride.

"It is a mix that includes regional recipes together with the old standbys that Americans enjoy, such as steak and potatoes, hamburgers, good soup, bread pudding and apple pie," he said.

"My culinary experiences have definitely exposed me to a wide variety of cuisines, as well as different cooking techniques."

McCarty said he enjoys using this experience in his creations, whether it is for breakfast with French toast or perfectly prepared eggs, or at lunch with Marston's special salads, interesting sandwiches and gourmet hamburgers.

Dinners are his favorite to prepare. He keeps the dinner menu exciting and interesting with a nice variety of dishes.

"If you are a first time visitor to Marston's for dinner, I suggest that you try my tenderloin of beef stuffed with Shitake mushrooms, blue cheese with a candied garlic reduction," McCarty said. "Enjoy this dish with a glass of good red Cabernet Sauvignon and you will have a delicious gastronomic experience."

If you enjoy fish, McCarty suggests the sea scallops with lemon butter and chives.

Marston's also has a very good selection of wines, as well as other interesting beverages to accompany your meal.

McCarty met his wife, Kristen Horstall — who also graduated from LCHS — while they were working at the Crocodile Cantina in Glendale. Kristen is a school teacher in Valencia where the McCarty's live. They have three children: two boys and a girl, ages 11, 8, and 4. As a family, the McCarty's enjoy mountain biking, skiing and snowboarding.



Marston's is located at 151 E. Walnut St. in Pasadena.