

In the Chef's Corner

The Red Rooster Café



BY VANESSA
ROACH

THE RED ROOSTER CAFÉ, located on Elk Street in Gassaway, resides in a building constructed in 1905. For many years the building housed the Gassaway Midland Department Store, and then it became the Braxton County Senior Center until a new facility was built.

The building had been empty for several years when my husband Ritchie and I were approached with the idea of purchasing it to establish a restaurant and build apartments. My husband always had an interest in having a restaurant; I tell people this was Ritchie's dream and I'm living it.

We purchased the building in 2008 and set out to "demodel" the remodeling that had been done over the years. We removed the drop ceilings, took out the fluorescent lighting to expose the original tin ceilings, uncovered the 10-inch hemlock beams, removed several layers of floor coverings and painted and decorated. The Red Rooster Café, with its "Country French

Quarters" atmosphere, opened for business the day after Thanksgiving of that year.

Dairus Davis, our cook, was the first person we hired. He has 18 years of experience in cooking and managing restaurants, and he does a great job on the grill.

The dishes we serve at the Red Rooster Café are recipes handed down from my family. My mother, grandmother, my aunts and even uncles were excellent cooks. I make all the Italian dishes, and the items on the menu are the items I have served in my home to family and friends over the years.

We run daily specials for lunch and always have a fresh homemade soup on the menu. On Friday and Saturday nights our special is West Virginia rainbow trout. All day on Fridays we serve a Mexican special of beef or chicken enchiladas with Spanish rice, a grilled taco, taco salad and nachos grande. On Sundays we host a buffet.

Meeting so many different people from all over—not just West Virginia but the United States as well—has been exciting

and fun. Customers often tell us we're the best-kept secret in West Virginia.

The Red Rooster Café's hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 5 p.m.-9 p.m. and Sunday, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information, call (304) 364-6023.



Chef Dairus Davis and
Owner Vanessa Roach



Red Rooster Crab Cakes

- 1 16-oz. can of jumbo lump crab meat
- ½ cup finely chopped onions
- ½ cup yellow, red or orange pepper, chopped
- 1 tsp old Bay Seasoning
- 1 tsp Lowry's Seasoned Salt
- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- 2 whole eggs
- 2 cups Panko

Dice the peppers and onions and add the Old Bay Seasoning. Sauté the ingredients in a frying pan and then transfer the mixture to a mixing bowl. Add the mayonnaise, eggs and Panko and mix. Return the mixture to a pan and sauté in olive oil or butter until golden brown.



Miss Daphne's Classic New Orleans Bread Pudding

with Whiskey Sauce

Custard Mix

- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 8 eggs
- 5½ cups milk
- 1 tsp vanilla

Pudding

- ½ lb. French bread
- ¼ cup pecans, toasted
- ½ cup butter, melted
- Custard mix

Break the French bread into medium pieces. Add the pecans and melted butter to the bread and arrange in a greased 9x12-inch baking dish. Pour the custard mix over bread pieces.

To bake, place the baking dish in a larger pan to create a double boiler effect. Pour a small amount of water into the bottom pan and bake at 350° for 50-60 minutes. Test by inserting a knife blade into the center of the pudding.

Whiskey Sauce

- 1 cup butter, melted
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp whiskey (optional)

Melt the butter and whip in the powdered sugar. Fold in the eggs and add the whiskey. Serve warm over the bread pudding.



Nunnie's Pastini

Serves 8

- 2 tbsp butter
- ¼ cup finely chopped onions
- 2 48-oz. cans chicken broth
- ½ tsp seasoned salt
- ¾ cup Acini de Pepe pasta
- 4 chicken breast halves, skinless, boneless, cooked and cut into small pieces
- 2 eggs, beaten

Melt the butter, careful not to burn it, and sauté the onions until they are translucent. Add the chicken broth and bring the mixture to a boil. Add the pasta, seasoned salt and chicken. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Drizzle the beaten eggs into the mixture and simmer for an additional two minutes. ■

Photography by Tracy Toler

