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Restaurant news

Atlas Global Bistro and other spots offer Valentine's Day specials

Molly Abraham / Special to The Detroit News

Here's a reminder: If you are planning on going out to dinner on Saturday, Feb. 14, make your plans soon. For the unaware, it's Valentine's Day.

Every time Valentine's Day rolls around, I'm reminded of the time, oblivious to the date, I showed up at the door of a popular Italian restaurant without a reservation at 7 p.m. The place was packed and, of course, there were no tables available.

It's always important to make dinner reservations for Valentine's Day, especially when it falls on a Saturday.

Saturday is the busiest night of the week in restaurants, even without a special occasion, so that makes it especially important to nail down a reservation.

There are some good Valentine's Day deals around town. An especially elegant one is at **Atlas Global Bistro**, where a four-course dinner for two is not only relatively affordable at \$60, but typical of the creativity of chef Christian Borden.

It starts with a trio of hors d'oeuvres, including seared duck liver foie gras with pineapple jam, a small cheese pastry (gougere) and a fried Blue Point oyster.

Then, there's a choice of lobster bisque or a green salad, followed by an entree of beef tournedos with seven garnishes, including seared wild mushrooms, asparagus and truffled potato croquette. Dessert is chocolate sorbet with cookies, and berries with cream. Atlas is at 3111 Woodward Ave., Detroit; (313) 831-2241.

Other Valentine's Day specials include an interesting one at Josephine , the Ferndale creperie. It's offering a multi-course spread, with a choice of 11 entrees. The price of the complete dinner is determined by the chosen entree. For instance, coq au vin is \$24; beef short ribs, \$31; and surf and turf, \$39. The price includes a choice of four appetizers, including butternut squash soup and garlic-stuffed mushrooms. There are four desserts to choose from. Josephine is at 241 W. Nine Mile, Ferndale; (248) 399-1366.

Other Valentine specials may be found at **Ayse's Cafe** , 1703 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor, (734) 662-1711, where a four-course Turkish dinner, served at 5:30 or 7:30 p.m., is \$35.

At **P.F. Chang's China Bistro** they aren't waiting for Valentine's Day, but already have started serving four-course dinners for two at \$39.95. Dinner begins with soup; then a sharable appetizer, perhaps salt-and-pepper calamari or spring rolls; then two entrees from a large choice, including chicken wraps and Cantonese shrimp. Dessert is included. You will find locations at the Somerset Collection, Troy; the Mall at Partridge Creek, Clinton Township; Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn; and 17905 Haggerty Road, Northville Township.

In other news, Bacco Ristorante has made a significant menu change, says chef/proprietor Luciano Del Signore. The fine Italian restaurant at 29410 Northwestern Highway, (248) 356-6600, has lowered prices across the board.

Patrons may have three courses for what was formerly the price of an entree, Del Signore says. The portion sizes have been reduced to smaller, more traditional Italian-sized helpings. Also, he notes that entrees are completely garnished with vegetables and starches.

Another change at Bacco is the availability of half-pours of wines, at half the price of a full glass, allowing guests to sample if they choose. Bacco is now a total non-smoking restaurant, including the bar. Previously, only the dining room was non-smoking.

Also going the economy route is **Wolfgang Puck Grille** at the MGM Detroit, (313) 465-1648, the only restaurant in the complex that allows entrance to the under-21 set, where there's a three-course \$35 fixed-price dinner available Sunday through Thursday, and there's also a lighter hit to the wallet in the adjoining tavern, where the menu includes 15 dishes, notably choices such as a terrific chopped vegetable salad and a spicy chicken pizza with roasted garlic, sweet peppers and cilantro, all for less than \$20.

Tribute is luring customers with live entertainment beginning this weekend. Sinatra sound-alike Mark Randisi appears Friday and Saturday at the Farmington Hills restaurant, and there's live piano music on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings.

A changing lineup of vocalists will appear on future weekends at Tribute, 31425 W. 12 Mile, Farmington Hills, (248) 848-9393, with music from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.

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