

Nic-L-Inn, 30 years of rustic charm and unique dining experiences



Frewsburg and her parents met in Buffalo. Linda's father built a hunting camp just past the marina and their family spent weekends at the camp. When her parents retired, they moved there.

The Andriaccios were operating a restaurant in a rented space in Buffalo. They were seeking a new location to own, with space to expand.

"At the time, the former Red Wing Restaurant, near the marina, was the only eating establishment within 10 miles," Linda said. "In those days, there were no McDonalds, Burger King or other fast food chains in the area. The market was independently owned restaurants."

"The area was growing," she said. "The marina was expanding and people were coming down here and building summer homes. The potential was there and the location made sense."

In May of 1980, the restaurateurs moved from Buffalo to the Town of South Valley and bought the Lucky Dollar — renaming it the Nic-L-Inn. The name has its roots from Nick and Linda's names, and coming from Buffalo, they choose the Buffalo nickel as their logo.

The first 10 years entailed major remodeling. With the help of family and friends, the couple totally renovated the restaurant. The seating capacity has tripled from 50 to now 150. Several additions have been added, along with three fieldstone fireplaces.

"We started out with a fairly casual menu and evolved into a full-scale menu with steaks, veal, seafood, chicken, Italian dishes and dinner salads — a meal in themselves," Linda said.

"We were the first restaurant in the area to serve sizzling steak on a hot steel platter," Nick said.

The Nic-L-Inn prides itself with high quality food and service. It has one of the biggest kitchens in the area. The couple knew they would be making their entrees on site, not buying from a supplier and bringing it in. The steaks are cut fresh on the premises. Other specialty sauces are

prepared fresh by the chef.

A specialty on the menu is Nick's famous Nicolino Bread, inspired by Nick's mother. Nic-bread has been on their menu since the beginning and is their most popular appetizer.

Nick's mother's spaghetti sauce was also legendary and is still a well-guarded secret. He cook's the spaghetti sauce, using his mother's recipe, at the restaurant in a 50-gallon drum. Nick also hand makes his lasagna on site.

"We go through 400 pounds of prime rib a week during the summer season. It is served Thursday through Saturday," Linda said.

The Nic-L-Inn has begun its "30 year anniversary celebration," official in May, and is featuring a special anniversary menu.

"Our location is not the key to our success," Linda said. "Our diners need to have a reason to come."

The Andriaccios attribute one of the factors of their success to word-of-mouth.

"Once they found us and ate here, enjoyed the food and got a glimpse of the natural beauty of this area with the wildlife, they came back," she said.

"I remember one incident, in particular. We were packed. It was a Saturday night and I was seating people," Linda said. "All of a sudden I saw the whole dining room downstairs run to the other side. There were three bears walking across the ridge about 25-feet from the restaurant."

"People don't forget things like that," she said. "That is part of our success."

The late Steve Wallquist of Salamanca was the head chef at the Nic-L-Inn for 18 years. Travis Smith was his under chef. He started out at the restaurant as a dishwasher and left to go to culinary school. After graduating from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Smith served his internship at a facility in Yellowstone National Park.

"Travis, an accomplished chef, has

developed some signature dishes for us," Linda said. His 'Cajun Seafood Bisque,' is very popular."

Another reason diners flock back to the Nic-L-Inn is the restaurant is known for its huge population of hummingbirds. They're abundant May through September.

"I had the experience of meeting Roger Tory Peterson," she said. "When they dedicated the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, the dean of the college brought him down for dinner. Peterson told me, face-to-face, 'I did my earliest sketchings in this valley. When I was about 16, I would come down here because this valley has the biggest variety of bird species.'"

"People come here to dine for a great meal, the atmosphere and a nice total experience," Linda said. "People look for consistency, which I believe we have. They know the food will be as good this time as it was 10 years ago."

Press photos by Deb Everts
(Top): The Nic-L-Inn sits along Little Bone Run. (Left): Nick and Linda Andriaccio pose in front of their logo, carved in the main door. (Right): The fieldstone fireplace with mounted buffalo head in the bar. (Below): Taxidermy display in the bar. (Bottom): Lower dining room.

"We have second-generation servers. Their mothers were servers here," she said.

Dinners are served Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5-9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 5-10 p.m. and Sunday from 1-8 p.m. The restaurant is closed Mondays. During January, February and March, it is open Thursday - Sunday. The outdoor patio dining area is open May-September.

The Nic-L-Inn is located at 12045 Bone Run Road, Frewsburg, in the Town of South Valley. For more information or to make reservations, call (716) 354-5011. Visit online at www.niclinn.com.



[By Deb Everts]
Staff Writer

Imagine dining at a rustic, Adirondack Great Camp, with its natural wood interior, massive fireplaces and mounted hunting trophies. Upon arriving at the Nic-L-Inn, one would think he or she was in such a place.

The bar showcases taxidermy displays and the two dining rooms offer fine dining in a relaxed, log cabin atmosphere. Fieldstone fireplaces flank each room and the lower dining room has wall-to-wall windows for viewing the abundant wildlife outside.

Owners Nick and Linda Andriaccio say it has not always been this way. The restaurant started out as a run-down cedar log cabin.

The Nic-L-Inn was preceded by Mooney's Tavern, which was relocated on the site from Quaker Bridge when the Kinzua Dam was built, and later The Lucky Dollar.

"Ben Mooney relocated his restaurant on this property, because, at the time, the road was the main thoroughfare between Jamestown and Bradford," Linda said.

"So many people ask me, 'How did you end up here, out in the middle of nowhere,' she laughed.

Her mother is originally from