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Marti's Supper Club

By C.W. Lattin, Orleans County Historian



Our photo, from about 50 years ago, shows the interior of Marti's Supper Club in Albion. Four of the Martillotta brothers, Louis, Sam, Jimmy and John, formed a partnership and opened a restaurant on July 3, 1946.

For their dream, the four had purchased two Main Street properties, the former Beckwith house and the Wage house and barn. The homes were torn down for a parking lot in the front while the Wage barn was transformed into a dining room. In front of the barn was added an art deco style cocktail lounge and to the north, a lobby and kitchen wing.

The Martillotta partnership ran this very fine restaurant until April 1, 1977, when it was purchased by Ralph and Joyce Dollinger. In August, 1983, the Dollinger's sold it to the Albion Lodge of Elks.

For over 30 years, the Martillotta were known for operating a first class supper club with the finest cuisine. They were good businessmen and the four supported their families on the income that the restaurant produced. Their brother "Mimi," who was not part of the partnership, was often seen as a regular bartender in the cocktail lounge.

Marti's drew a clientele from a much greater area than Albion or even Orleans County. When the establishment first opened, Shirley Tobin played the piano nightly in the cocktail lounge. Also back in the 1940's and 50's, Joe Cady and his band played six nights a week for dancing in the dining room. This three-piece band consisted of Joe at the piano or accordion, Tony Anderson with guitar and Jimmy Bocare on bass fiddle.

Sam and Jimmy Martillotta were the ones the public saw - Jimmy tended bar and Sam was in charge of the dining room - while Louis, the oldest brother and John, the youngest, worked behind the scenes in the kitchen.

Some items on their 1946 menu were: Broiled large live lobster, \$3.50; roast leg of lamb, \$2.00; broiled filet mignon, \$3; and deep sea scallops, \$1.75.

Sam once told me that when the brothers built over the old Wage barn, they removed a turntable in the floor put there by Dr. Wage. It seems he was one of the first men to own a horseless carriage in Albion. Because these vehicles did not have a reverse gear, he could drive into the barn and turn the horseless carriage around on the turntable to head it out.

Those were different times indeed. Yes, we've come a long way since the horseless carriage. But we've also lost a lot in the art and manner of fine dining in a supper club. A generation or two of people after World War II enjoyed the atmosphere of Lucky Strikes, the ambiance of stiff martinis, the music of a dance band and raw oysters along with rare beef.

Yes, it's an era gone by, for better or for worse, and remembered fondly by one who thoroughly enjoyed Marti's.