


HURSDAY, MAY 8, 2008

The Miami Herald 

FOOD
DINING
EFFECT

TROPICAL LIFE

Like Mom used to make

Treasured recipes from Cook's Corner, 10



miami.com

CULINARY CAGE MATCH: FAT MAN'S RIBS VS. NORTH ONE 10'S
NEIGHBORS AND CLASSIFIEDS INSIDE

A FORK ON THE ROAD

Tea room serves up history, home cooking



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As the South Florida skyline grows, it's nice to know a pocket of one-story cottages from another era exists at Cauley Square, just off Dixie Highway in far south Miami-Dade. The "village" is a cluster of about 25 structures, many housing galleries and small shops, set on 10 acres with tropical gardens, gurgling fountains and little plazas.

You can't miss the pink and white tea room with lace curtains at the windows. Out front are topiary figures modeled after Seurat's *La Grande Jatte* — tall, ivy-draped ladies in leafy bustles holding parasols woven from twigs.

Inside is a warren of quirky rooms filled with cabinets of curios, teapots, china sets, framed opera fans, stained glass lamps and crystal chandeliers. It resembles a Victorian parlor furnished by a pack rat and has a delightful yesteryear charm.

It would be a sweet place to take Mom for lunch on Sunday for her special day. All mothers will get flowers, and there will be a photographer on hand.

Cauley Square was designed around a flat-iron building that pioneer farmer William H. Cauley built as a warehouse. (In later years it was a speakeasy and bordello.) Many of the original structures housed workers for Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway, which reached Goulds in 1903 — allowing Cauley to ship his tomatoes north in the winter, making him a fortune.

Other buildings came from old downtown Goulds, and were bought and assembled into Cauley Square by preservationist Mary Ann Ballard. She opened the tea room in 1979, and in 1992, at the age of 77, led the effort to rebuild it and the surrounding shops after Hurri-

cane Andrew devastated the historic site. Ballard died in 1998, and a few years later her children sold Cauley Square to construction-company owner Frances Varela.

A little over a year ago, Varela, a native of Honduras, decided to take a hands-on approach to the tea room. She spiffed it up and hired Mary Quigley, a retired Irish pastry chef who had worked there years ago. Aunt Mary, as she is affectionately known, makes everything from scratch.

There's always French onion soup with gooey cheese covering a rich broth. On Sunday, meatloaf with mashed potatoes and tilapia with rice will join crab au gratin, quiche and salads on the menu.

On a hot day, the fruit salad with frozen yogurt and banana bread is lovely. Those with dainty appetites will love the platter of finger sandwiches (egg salad, cream cheese, ham salad and chicken salad on white or banana bread layered with butter cream) served with fruit ambrosia.

Tea is available iced in a glass or hot by the cup or pot. Mary's cakes range from German chocolate to coconut and are on display under glass domes along with apple-cranberry Harvest pie — an old favorite, just like Cauley Square.

Linda Bladholm's latest book is Latin and Caribbean Grocery Stores Demystified.

■ Place: Cauley Square Tea Room Restaurant.

■ Address: 12310 SW 224th St., Goulds.

■ Contact: 305-258-0044.

■ Hours: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

■ Prices: Soups and salads \$2.75-\$10.95, sandwiches \$8.50-\$9.95, entrees \$14.95, cake and pie \$5.

■ FYI: Mother's Day lunch noon-4 p.m.; reservations required.



TEA, ANYONE? Francis Varela, owner of Cauley Square, hoists a teapot by the topiary. Left, a tempting slice of Harvest pie.



PHOTOS BY LINDA BLADHOLM/FOR THE HERALD

APPETIZER

MELTED BRIE, PEAR AND HAM TOASTS

Serve as hors d'oeuvres or as a light lunch with soup.

- ¼ pound baked ham, minced
- 2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
- 10 (½-inch thick) diagonal slices French or Italian bread, toasted lightly
- 1½ pears, peeled and cut into 20 wedges
- ½ pound brie, rind trimmed and cheese cut into 10 edges
- 20 small sprigs watercress

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Combine ham and mustard in a bowl. Arrange bread in a shallow baking pan. Top each slice with some of the ham mixture, 2 pear wedges and a wedge of brie. Bake 6 to 8 minutes, until cheese is melted. Garnish with 2 sprigs of watercress per toast. Makes 10 toasts.

Source: Adapted from *Gourmet's America* (Random, 1994).

Per toast: 278 calories (28 percent from fat), 8.7 g fat (4.4 g saturated, 2.8 g monounsaturated), 28.1 mg cholesterol, 12.3 g protein, 37.4 g carbohydrates, 2.7 g fiber, 686 mg sodium.



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Cranberry-walnut
crumb cake
recipe:
MiamiHerald.com
/Food.