

Pride, family and submarine sandwiches — Jersey Shore style

By DENNIS TAYLOR

LIFE IS largely about finding a great sandwich, according to Terry Teplitzky, who ought to know.

Teplitzky and three brothers grew up in Atlantic City, N.J. with a beach for a backyard, the Boardwalk just beyond their front porch, and world-class sandwich shops only a few strides away, wherever they wandered.

Teplitzky eventually wandered afar — all the way to the West Coast, where, in 1983, he married Monterey native Cristina Fekeci and found everything he wanted ... almost.

“When I came here, I discovered that if you slice up any kind of meat and slap it between two slices of bread, you can call yourself a deli,” said the 61-year-old former Carmel man (he lived at 11th and Lincoln, then San Carlos and Vista), who now lives in the Las Palmas subdivision of Salinas. “That’s not what I was used to.”

A chef by profession, Teplitzky has spent most of nearly four decades in Monterey County trying to satisfy that hunger. After working previously at various hospitality venues along Monterey Bay, he became owner/operator of Michael’s Catering in 1997. In 2002, in Marina, he opened Wild Thyme Deli and Café.

And last year, after convincing his two surviving brothers to relocate, the Teplitzkys christened Boardwalk Sub Shop, an authentic, Atlantic City-style sandwich restaurant at 470 Alvarado St. in Monterey.

Brother Howard, 57, moved north from Temecula. J.T. came from Connecticut. Both had been lifetime employees of the casino industry before partnering with Terry. Now, they feel like they’ve brought a slice of Jersey-style sandwich heaven to the Central Coast.

Bread is the key

Business there is booming, but it was a long time coming. In fact, owning a restaurant together had been a dream of the Teplitzky brothers for much of their adult lives.

“Our oldest brother, Victor, died two-and-a-half years ago,” Terry said. “We were sitting around at his memorial service when one of us said, ‘You know, we really should have opened up that sub shop.’ That’s when I jumped and said, ‘Look, either we do it, or we stop talking about it.’”

What the Teplitzkys imported from Atlantic City, they say, is tradition. They roast all of their meats daily. All vegetables are fresh. They make their own cheese. But

Howard (left) and J.T. Teplitzky, along with brother Terry (not pictured) serve up tasty Jersey-shore style subs, sandwiches and fries that take them back to their childhood in Atlantic City, N.J.



PHOTO/DENNIS TAYLOR

the real magic, they say, is in the bread.

“The secret is the water on the East Coast. Nobody can duplicate it,” Terry said. “Same thing with the New York pizza: It’s the water they use to make the dough.”

The bread is so important, say the Teplitzkys, that they flew it coast-to-coast via overnight mail on five different occasions, each time dropping it off at Palermo Bakery in Seaside.

“We took it to their bakers and said, ‘Make this ... this is how we want it,’” J.T. said. “So they’d bake some, we’d taste it, and say, ‘OK, that’s good ... now do this.’ Finally, we got the exact roll we wanted — the taste, the texture, everything.”

“It’s a great feeling when a local, or some tourist, comes in here and says, ‘I’m from back East. I know what a Philly cheesesteak is, and this is the real deal,’” Howard added.

Diving bell

The recipes for the sandwiches at Boardwalk Sub Shop — Jersey and Philly cheesesteaks, Italian sausage, meatball, pepper and egg, Jersey Italian (20 in all) — come straight from an idyllic childhood, the brothers say.

Their parents owned and operated the iconic Teplitzky’s Hotel on Pacific Avenue (it’s a green property on your Monopoly board), one of five kosher hotels in Atlantic City during the heyday of the Boardwalk — and long before casinos came to dominate the city’s skyline.

“A lot of the contestants in the Miss America Pageant stayed at our hotel every year, and we grew up with that, which always

made life more interesting for a family with four boys,” Terry said.

When they weren’t helping at the hotel or its restaurant, the brothers were typically left to their own devices in a place that came alive every summer like no other city in America. They spent their days at the beach (“the best babysitter in the world,” said Howard). They explored the Boardwalk at night, all the way down to Steel Pier, a wonderland of arcade games, big-name entertainment (Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller, Frank Sinatra and the rest of the Rat Pack, and Tony Grant’s Stars of Tomorrow stage show), and unique attractions.

They have fond memories of the famous diving bell, which dropped 20 feet into the sea.

“I never met a single person who saw a single thing down there, except maybe some seaweed, but I absolutely loved it because it felt like an adventure,” Terry said.

There was also the Diving Horse, which, seven days a week, up to four times a day, would plummet 40 feet into a 12-foot pool with a swimsuit-clad woman on its back.

“The Boardwalk was miles and miles,” Howard said. “You’d just walk and take in the different sights and smells — the food, the people and the stores, from high-end boutiques for the ladies to knickknack shops for the tourists.”

Ed McMahon, Johnny Carson’s famous sidekick, got his start there as a barker outside of a booth that sold kitchen gadgets, Terry remembered.

See **TEPLITZKY** page 29A

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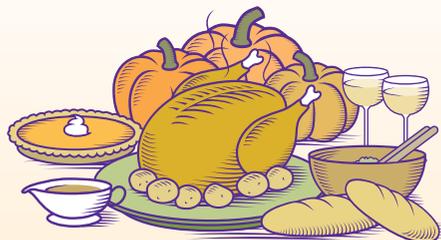
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Please inform your server which sides you would like:

- Chanterelle Mushroom Stuffing
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