

Eugene on THE EVE OF '86

by David Lantz and Tripp Sommer

On the town or on the homefront, New Year's Eve is a special night of the year for most everybody. Eugene's New Year's offerings are many and varied. Whether you want a quiet dinner for two at your favorite restaurant, or to entertain friends at home, or to rock in the New Year on the dance floor, here are some pointers and possibilities.

On the Town

A survey of area restaurants found that many are adhering to regular menus and service hours. Those include Poppi's, L'au-berge and Lou & Ev's. For details, be sure to call your favorite restaurant. NOW. Reservations are recommended to assure a splendid last evening of the calendar year. It guarantees you a table and helps the restaurant plan ahead when ordering ingredients.

There are always a few restaurants in town that use New Year's Eve to showcase their finest culinary capabilities.

Diners at the Excelsior Cafe will have five main courses, including one vegetarian, to choose from. The main course is the centerpiece for a five course meal which will include hors d'oeuvres, soup, salad, and special dessert. One choice entree will be Charcoal-Grilled Quail finished with a red currant, raspberry vinegar glaze. Prices for the full dinners will range from \$18 to \$25. Dinner will be served from 5:30 to 10:30. The number to call is 342-6963.

Cafe Central will be offering three dinner entrees, each one part of a six course meal with appetizers, soup, sorbet, salad, and cheese or dessert. One of the three specialty dinners will be Willamette Valley Medallions of Veal Tenderloin with fresh rosemary and shallot champagne sauce. The Cafe is offering seatings at 6:00 and 9:00, with a fixed price of \$25 per dinner. Their number is 343-9510.

In recognition of the American New Year, Tom's Tea House will be open on Dec. 31, from 11 am to 10 pm. Besides his regular menu, Tom will be featuring Crispy Duck for the evening. First marinated in Szechwan spices overnight, it is then steamed for an hour or two before being deep fried. Served with vegetables and rice, Crispy Duck can be yours for \$8.75. For

more details, and the address of the new W. 7th location, call ahead. The number is 343-7658.

Chanterelle is offering the classic French Bouillabaisse (a rich stew of six or seven types of fish, depending on what is fresh and available), with the likely ingredients of lobster, halibut, cod, and prawns, seasoned with leeks, wine, and saffron. Diners are a la carte, served with salad, potato or vegetable, bread and butter. Prices range from \$9.95 to \$13.95. Another special will be offered in addition to the regular menu. The number to call is 484-4065.

From Maine, live lobster at Leah's. The special dinner will be served with one of two sauces: Sauce Americain, made with seafood and cream; or a lemon garlic beurre blanc. In addition to the regular menu, Leah's is offering another special. Menu items will be served a la carte and prices range from \$7.95 to \$16.95. Service begins at 5:00 and nobody knows just when it will stop. The Kammerer-Dowd Jazz Duo will provide vibes and piano music from 10:00 to 1:00. Parking is available upstairs. 484-4041.

As the midnight hour approaches, you may want some more people to ring in the New Year with. The Eve of '86 offers plenty of fun to choose from. To avoid an exhaustive catalogue of every night spot in town, our focus remains on hotels and restaurants.

The vocal trio of Brian Swingle, Allyson Coles and Paul Mack will perform at the Treehouse from 7 pm through midnight. Based in the lounge, the trio will venture out into the dining room periodically to serenade diners with songs from Tin Pan Alley and Broadway, as well as popular favorites. More info... 485-4444.

The Allnighterz, featuring Barbara Healy, will play rhythm & blues in Jo Federigo's Bar. The show starts at 9:30 and goes 'til 1:30. No cover. The kitchen will be open until midnight and dinner specials will be served upstairs. The phone is 343-8488.

West on Fifth Street, the Electric Station's Jazz Depot has a show getting underway at 9:30 and going until 1:30. There is no cover charge. Jazz enthusiasts will be pleased to hear the Don Latarski Group light up the Electric Station. 485-4444.

The Hilton will be bustling with New Year's activity. The Jack Charles Band

(Mien Street) and Johnny & The Distractions will ring in the New Year in the ballroom. The show runs from 8:00 until 2:00. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. To cure the munchies, Oscar's Cafe will be open all night. Holiday room rates are \$39. 342-2000.

The Starlighters big band will play New Year's Eve in the Willamette Room at the Valley River Inn. Cost is \$20, which must be prepaid, and you must preregister. For more information call Caleb Standafer of the Starlighters at 942-3000. Valley River Inn has an overnight package for two. A room and breakfast at Sweetwaters are included for \$70. For more details on all NYE activities at VRI call 341-3463 during business hours.

deFriscio's in the Atrium is throwing a "Downtown New Year's Eve Champagne Gala." It will feature dinner from 6-10 pm. Music by Deuce Coupe, two former members of the Cashiers, will begin at 9 pm. There will be space for dancing. There's no cover and there will be door prizes, party favors and surprises. For reservations call 484-2263.

Taylor's will feature the Paul Delay Band with new sax player Chris Mercer, formerly of John Mayall's Blues Breakers and other bands. They'll be celebrating their newly released album as well. There will be free champagne in the wee hours and free cab rides home for those who are unable to drive.

If "steppin' out" is not your tulip glass of champagne... spend an evening at home with good food and good friends.

On the Homefront

How many people you decide to entertain will determine how you plan the menu. A sit-down dinner for eight is an ambitious affair, no matter how you slice it. A bash for 25 is less of a chore, but still requires a combination of organization and some hard work. When party time comes, your main duty is to enjoy the evening and see that others do, too. Don't end up sitting in a daze of exhaustion, wondering "Why my house?"

Be in control of your menu. The author of *Entertaining* and *Hors d'Oeuvres*, Martha Stewart, suggests what she calls the "Golden Rules" as guidelines to such events. These rules make great sense for any size party with any type of fun, ambitiousness or ambience. Here are two of the rules.

1) "Be organized. Make lists—of guests, supplies, and foodstuffs. Make a timetable—for shopping, cooking, serving, and even cleanup."

2) "Be flexible. Searching store after store for scarce items can be costly and futile. Substitute hearts of romaine when Belgian endive can't be found."

Let's say you've invited 25 people to bring a dish or beverage for a light buffet. Consider how many chips with guacamole you can stand. Are you still in control? You

need French bread and Camembert? Be specific with the people you have invited and tell them what you need. After all, you are providing the house, the champagne, and possibly the main course. More often than not the guests want to contribute. So let them. The feast will come together and the champagne will flow.

For the main course of a cold buffet we recommend a cold stuffed leg of lamb.

Stuffed Leg of Lamb with Herbs, Olives, Artichoke Hearts & Mozzarella

5 lb. leg of lamb (save the bone for soup stock) (Stuffing)

1/4 lb. bacon or Pancetta (Italian bacon)
10-12 fresh basil leaves (or substitute fresh rosemary, thyme, or mint)
6 cloves garlic
6-7 oz. Mozzarella, sliced
salt, freshly ground pepper
5 artichoke hearts, chopped
12 Greek olives, pitted and chopped

(Marinade for Lamb)

2 cups red wine
1/2 cup soy
1 cup olive oil
3 cloves garlic
1/2 chopped lemon (with rind)
salt, freshly ground pepper
3 carrots
1 onion

1) Combine herbs, garlic, artichokes, and olives in a food processor or chop coarsely with a knife.

2) Rub the lamb inside and out with salt and pepper. Lay the mozzarella over 1/2 the filleted leg. Spread the stuffing mixture over the cheese and 1/2 portion of the lamb. Roll up and tie, tucking in any loose or torn pieces.

3) Brown the lamb all over in olive oil and any remaining herbs. Cover for five minutes.

4) Pour off any excess fats and oils and place in a casserole pan with carrots and onion and bacon draped over the stuffed leg. With remaining marinade, cook in a preheated oven for approx. 15 minutes per pound. Baste with marinade every 20 minutes.

This dish is superb 15 minutes out of the oven or at room temperature, sliced 1/4 inch thick. Chutneys are an excellent complement.

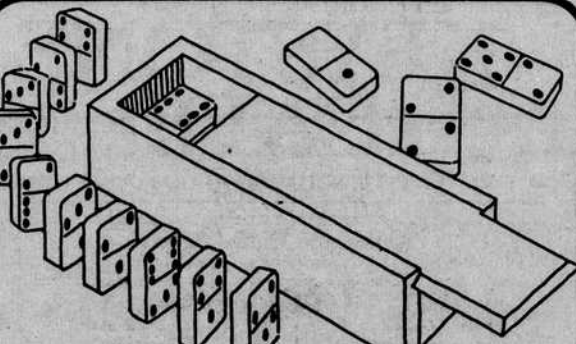
Pop the corks, enjoy the party.

The Morning After

The New Year greets you... slowly, you work your way out of bed to size it all up. A word of caution. If '86 is anything like '85, you're gonna need all the luck you can get. Southern tradition calls for black-eyed peas on New Year's Day to bring good luck for the whole year. So, take the peas you soaked overnight, and put them on the stove with ham hocks, bay leaves, onion, garlic, salt and pepper. Let it cook as you wake up. Cornbread and Bloody Mary's will make it a meal to get you through the year. It's 1986... here we go...

[Tripp Sommer is a radio journalist at KRXX-AM and KLCC-FM. David Lantz is Head Chef at Cafe Central.]

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