

Since 1967: Chuck Wagon celebrates “the Big 4-Oh!” in Livermore Falls

(LIVERMORE FALLS) -- In the summer of 1967, the Beatles set the music world on fire with the release of their 8th album, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band... the Boston Red Sox were on a major winning streak, filling fans with hope that '67 would be the year to finally 'Reverse the Curse'... and in Livermore Falls, the earth was rumbling under the force of a local stampede to a brand new restaurant called Chuck Wagon!

My, how time flies... This summer, Chuck Wagon restaurant in downtown Livermore Falls is celebrating its 40th anniversary!

If you're from this area, you've probably been to Chuck Wagon at least a time or two. It's been hailed for generations as the perfect place to have a good time and enjoy great food with friends and family. The western-themed décor adds a fun touch, while signature steaks cooked over a real charcoal pit can bring out the hidden Cowboy or Cowgirl in a hardcore Northerner. But even if you are a regular customer, you might not be aware of the restaurant's colorful history.

Back in 1959, a Lewiston man by the name of “Wild Bill” Dumais started his own chain of Chuck Wagon restaurants in Maine. At the height of his success, there were eight restaurants throughout the State, from Lewiston to Brunswick to Ellsworth. (In case you're wondering, “Wild Bill” got his nickname from Lewiston Chuck Wagon customers who got a kick out of his Cowboy hat.) On July 10th, 1967, Dumais joined forces with Norm Paradis to open a Chuck Wagon in Livermore Falls.

In 1969, Norm bought out Dumais, and Chuck Wagon has been owned and operated by the Paradis family ever since. Today, it's the only remaining Chuck Wagon location.

“The restaurant has been through several expansions over the years,”



Marc and Norm Paradis, Owners of the Chuck Wagon restaurant.

Norm said. “Our kitchen today is double the size of the original. We added the Gold Dust Dining Room in '75, building into the space that used to be Potter Jewelry Store. In '76, we doubled the size of the Grand Canyon Banquet Room, and in the late 70s we created the Sunset Dining Rooms for private parties and functions.” Norm also mentioned that there are plans for several interior and exterior renovations later this year.

Norm's son, Marc, is part owner and the current manager of Chuck Wagon, allowing Norm the well-earned ability to ‘winter’ in Florida. Marc noted that the menu, as well as the building, has seen plenty of changes over the years.

“We update the menu every year,” Marc said. “We want to keep up with the changing tastes of our customers. “People are more health-conscious than ever before, so we keep updating our Heart Healthy selections. Current favorites are our Heart Healthy salads that can be topped with a choice of

grilled steak, chicken or shrimp. I also get plenty of rave reviews for our 100% lean House Steak. We also have a bunless gourmet burger with a choice of coleslaw or vegetable for carb-watchers.”

Marc stressed that all of Chuck Wagon's seafood selections can be broiled, and that the chefs are always delighted to accommodate special requests.

“All someone has to do is tell their waitress what they want, and we'll do everything we can to make them happy,” he said.

Not all food trends fall into the Healthy Heart category. Chuck Wagon recently added St. Louis-style BBQ ribs to keep up with the Nation's current love affair for that particular dish.

“The ribs have been extremely popular,” Marc said. “They really are excellent. We use just the right amount of secret seasoning BBQ sauce and they are unbelievably tender.”

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