

Dining

Bavarian Haus is offering authentic German food in its just-opened Winter Garden location

By Mary Anne Swickerath

If you are looking for comfort food to soothe your soul in this era of economic disaster, pandemic influenza and (locally) a too-hot start to summer, you couldn't do much better than heading to the Bavarian Haus, the brand-new German restaurant in Winter Garden.

The husband-and-wife team of Patricia Jarrell and Achim Weyer are serving authentic, made-from-scratch German dishes, highlighted by sauerbraten, the classic vinegar-marinated beef pot roast that they serve with sweet-and-sour red cabbage and spatzle (tiny dumplings).

But the menu is full of more German selections than I've ever heard of. There's leberkase (a type of meat loaf), bratwurst with sauerkraut and mashed potatoes, braised pork roast with dumplings and cabbage, and wiener schnitzel (pounded and breaded fried veal).

All are made from scratch and have that special something that home cooking offers — in this case, like having a German grandmother bringing out platefuls of traditional food from her kitchen just for you.

For appetizers, Patricia (who does all the cooking) serves cold meats and cheese, a salad made of strips of sausage and onions with an oil-and-vinegar dressing, and a frankfurter with bread. She also makes fresh soups each day, usually chicken noodle, tomato or goulash.

But don't leave without having Patricia's warm apple strudel with vanilla ice cream. It's perfect. Next time, I'll try her katiserschmarrn mit apfelmus (a cut-up and sugared pancake with raisins and apple puree). Maybe with a cup of the restaurant's strong German-style coffee.

For beverages, the Bavarian Haus offers eight German beers (along with Miller Light) and four German wines. You'll feel like you're in Munich during Oktoberfest!

If you get there early enough on a Saturday, the restaurant plans to sell German breads



Patricia Jarrell and Achim Weyer are the owners of the Bavarian Haus, which opened June 5 in Winter Garden.

from Yalaha Bakery in Lake County or from a local source.

A long-held dream of Patricia and Achim, who are Winter Garden residents, was to open their own German restaurant in West Orange County. They wanted to be the first one to bring the tastes they've long known and loved to this area.

Achim was born in Essen, Germany, and grew up in Berlin. Patricia's father was an American serviceman, and her mother a German native. She was born in an American hospital in France and moved to Ohio with her family as a baby. Her mother grew homesick for her country and soon moved back to the Munich area with Patricia. But she always wanted to return to the U.S.

After she and Achim met, they opened a restaurant at a golf course near Munich and began making plans to come to America, a plan realized two years ago when they moved here. They worked for Golden Corral until they had to chance to open Bavarian House June 5.

"The weekends have been great," said Achim, even though a formal sign has not yet arrived for their restaurant, located just south of Colonial Drive on County Road 535, and the guests have been enthusiastic about the food.

"Patricia is a very good cook, and she learned how to cook this food from her mother," he said, explaining that each German mother has her own special versions of the country's traditional food.

"My mother made sauerbraten a little differently than Patricia's mother. There is no one way to make it."

Does he enjoy his wife cooking? "I was a skinny man when I met her," he laughed.

The Bavarian Haus German Restaurant and Bakery, located at 1201 Winter Garden Vineland Road, is open Monday, Thursday and Sunday from noon to 8 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from noon to 10 p.m. It is closed Tuesday and Wednesday. For more information, call 407-654-0216.