



Photo by DAVID REED (left) and Oakland Press file photo (ABOVE)

The Historic White Horse Inn, located off of Dryden Road, east of M-24 (Lapeer Rd.) just north of Oxford in Metamora, is celebrating its 160th birthday this year. The popular restaurant embraces its history and its charm. "It's crooked — it tips, the ceiling is lower," Tim said. "We really believe the building is the key, the charm, the focus."



# Historic White Horse Inn 160TH BIRTHDAY

By ANNETTE KINGSBURY  
Special to The Oakland Press

In 1850, when a man named Daniel Ammerman put up a building at the main corner in the tiny town of Metamora, the usual method of transportation was by horse. It would be 22 years before the railroad would come to town.

The railroad has come and gone. But the building, now known as the Historic White Horse Inn, remains. Owners Tim and Lisa Wilkins are celebrating its 160th birthday this year and claim it's the oldest restaurant in Michigan "that still does business the way it was intended."

The Wilkinses, Addison Township residents who both have long careers in the restaurant business, purchased the building in 2001. They discovered it has served the town over the years as a stage-coach stop, village store, inn and restaurant.

Once known as the Hoard House, many believe early proprietor Lorenzo Hoard is still hanging about the place, keeping a benevolent eye on things.

"We believe we have up to five ghosts right now," Tim Wilkins said. "Do I believe it? Absolutely. I respect it. I hope we're keeping them happy."

Lisa and Tim both started their careers in the Machus Restaurants at the age of 16. Lisa went on to lead two charities. Tim spent 18 years with Machus, the last 10 of them at The Palace, where he oversaw food service. The couple, who have two daughters, were ready for a change when they heard the White Horse was for sale.

"I really wanted to find something that wasn't cookie-cutter," Tim said. "At that point I wasn't even sure where Metamora was ... so we came out one night, and I was captured."

The building has been enlarged several times through the years, but retains the feel of an old building, complete with quirks.

"It's crooked — it tips, the ceiling is lower," Wilkins said. "We really



Oakland Press file photo/JOSE JUAREZ

Tim Wilkins, who is the owner/chef of the Historic White Horse Inn. Wilkins and his wife, Lisa, have been owners of the business since 2001.



Courtesy of the Historic White Horse Inn

Lorenzo Hoard, right, one of the first owners of what is now known as the Historic White Horse Inn. Many people believe his ghost still walks the premises, as his boots (inset) are often found in locations where they had not previously been left.

believe the building is the key, the charm, the focus."

As chef and businessman, he also knows ambiance isn't enough. The food has to work, too, and he takes his culinary cues from his customers. He calls the menu "user friendly."

"Nothing is eclectic, nothing is infused," he said. "They wanted fresh fish. We started with

that."

Ann Rowland, an Indian River resident, has eaten at the White Horse several times while visiting friends in Metamora.

"I have never had a disappointing meal," she said. Her favorite item is the Fox Hunt salad. "It is incredible."

The Wilkinses also operate a restaurant consulting company, Wilkins



Photo courtesy of the Historic White Horse Inn

The Historic White Horse Inn hosted these ladies, right, and their dates for a local high school's 1936 prom.

Hospitality Group, but say the White Horse is top priority. They're in the

restaurant every day. Their approach seems to be paying off. In a town of barely 500 people and with a recession going on, "We had a nice year last year. Our sales showed growth," Tim said.

"We worked very hard with a lot of events, promotions. We have to figure out how to get them here."

One thing he has no intention of doing is trading on the ghost stories. Though ghost hunters stop by sometimes,



Photos courtesy of the Historic White Horse Inn

Images of the Historic White Horse Inn from the 1930s, left, and 1940s, above.



he doesn't do anything to encourage it. He does confess to consulting a medium, who "had a feeling (the ghosts) feel they are still working."

Since maintenance is a continual exercise in a building this old, Wilkins makes it a practice to converse privately with the ghosts before allowing workers to begin a project. When he doesn't, he says, things don't go well.

"If there's still a ghost or five here, they're here for a reason," he said.

"Something watches this building. Something takes care of it."

So don't expect the siding to change, the sign to be replaced, or a second White Horse in some other small town to pop up. Wilkins will try to keep the menu fresh, while keeping the building just the way it is.

"It's a lot of hours and a lot of work, but we also enjoy that we work very well together," he said. "It's become a way of life. We've met some very wonderful people."

SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

## HISTORIC WHITE HORSE INN 160TH BIRTHDAY

# Historic White Horse Inn relishes its rich history

By JANE PETERSON  
Special to The Oakland Press

**A**fter 160 years, the Historic White Horse Inn isn't just a restaurant where you can enjoy a great meal. It's a place to make wonderful memories.

Loyal patrons choose the eatery to celebrate an anniversary, enjoy a night on the town or relax with good meal because of the historical ambiance and connection to the people that make it special.

Among those "people" is the inn's first owner, Lorenzo Hoard. Born in 1816, Lorenzo purchased an existing village store and opened the Hoard House to serve hungry travelers in 1850. The business not only operated as a restaurant, but also as a boarding house that charged 50 cents for overnight guests, a general store and a stagecoach stop.

Many now consider Lorenzo, who died in 1888, the White Horses' resident ghost. Over the years, guests have reported a paranormal incident upstairs in Miss Lucy's Tearoom, Parlor and Gift Shop, a photo with orbs outside an upstairs window that can be viewed at [www.historicwhitehorseinn.com](http://www.historicwhitehorseinn.com) and hearing footsteps in empty rooms.

A pair of riding boots that are rumored to be Lorenzo's are always positioned at the top of the stairs. According to the Historic White Horse Inn's Web site, it is believed that in the middle of the night, when the rooms of the restaurant are quiet and the village streets are still, Lorenzo puts on his rid-



ing boots periodically to walk the halls and roam the village. Often the boots are discovered in a different location than at the top of the stairs and upstairs doors that are shut at closing are open in the morning.

Guests and staff embrace the legend of Lorenzo, whom owner Tim Wilkins refers to on the restaurant's Web site as a friendly ghost. When the lights flicker for no known reason on a sunny day, the dessert tray leaps off its table during dinner service with no one near it or other unusual or unexplainable things happen, staff and customers will give a "Hey Lorenzo" shout out, he said.

"I think he enjoys being around the energy of the staff and customers. I like to believe he stays around to ensure that I maintain the historical charm of White Horse Inn and the Village of Metamora," said Wilkins on the Web site.



"Lorenzo likes to keep an eye on me."

The White Horse Inn is a destination spot in Metamora, a charming town about five miles north of Oxford. It is an area people enjoying visiting and where families settle down to establish deep roots in the community. In fact, Chris Hoard, a relative of White Horse Inn founder Lorenzo Hoard, continues to live in the area today, residing in Oxford.

Some aspects of the business have stayed the same throughout the years. The White Horse Inn has always operated as a restaurant throughout its storied 160 year history – a rare feat in this day and age of businesses that close and open their doors again as a different type of store.

The interior of the restaurant pays homage to its historical past, which includes its role as a stop

Photo above by DAVID REED. Photos at left courtesy of the Historic White Horse Inn

Tim Wilkins pours a glass of wine from behind the bar counter, above, while at left a patron enjoys the Historic White Horse Inn in the 1960s. At far left is a photo said to show evidence of the friendly spirits that haunt the Historic White Horse Inn.

for the Underground Railroad and as a stagecoach stop. What once was an outdoor wooden sidewalk is now part of the restaurant's interior décor, for example.

In another nod to the past, the White Horse Inn is home to Miss Lucy's Tearoom, Parlor and Gift Shop. It was named after Lucy Carpenter Hoard, Lorenzo's wife. Afternoon luncheon tea is offered every Saturday from 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m. and it is open daily with a reservation of eight adults or more.

Current owners Tim and Lisa Wilkins became the caretakers of this historic business in 2001. Tim is a veteran of the Michigan restaurant and hospitality industry for over 30 years. The couple considers it an honor to be a part of the historic business, to uphold the integrity and reputation it has developed over the years and to serve the patrons who feel such a close connection to the Historic White Horse Inn.



## 1850-2010: A Historical Perspective

By JANE PETERSON  
Special to The Oakland Press

**U**pon hearing about White Horse Inn's 160th anniversary milestone, some might pause and think "Wow, that's a long time." But how long is it really? Let's check out some of these fun facts supplied by Tim and Lisa Wilkins, who have owned this historic institution in Metamora for the last nine years. The year the White Horse Inn was established as the Hoard House, 1850, was:

- Thirteen years after Michigan became a U.S. State in 1837
- The same year the modern marshmallow was invented
- One year after the safety pin was invented by Walter Hunt
- The same year Levi Strauss made his 1st blue jeans
- The year California became the 31st state
- Three years before potato chips were invented by George Crum
- Ten years before the vacuum cleaner was invented by Daniel Hess
- Thirteen years before Lincoln's Gettysburg address
- Eleven years before the American Civil War
- Twenty-six years before the refrigerator was invented by Carl von Linde and the telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell
- Twenty-nine years before the light bulb was invented by Thomas Alva Edison and the new Michigan State Capitol was dedicated in Lansing
- Forty-seven years after aspirin was invented by Felix Hoffmann



## Sock Hops, Car Cruises & Carriage Rides

By JANE PETERSON  
Special to The Oakland Press

**T**here's always something going on at the Historic White Horse Inn.

Just as the restaurant was a gathering spot in the 1800s and 1900s, so continues the tradition into the 2000s with special events like the annual Sock Hop, Thursday afternoon car cruise and horse drawn carriage/sleigh rides and dinner packages.

The White Horse Inn will be filled with poodle skirts, saddle shoes and leather jackets June 26 as the **White Horse Annual Sock Hop** will be held in conjunction with the Lapeer Road Country Car Cruise. The restaurant will be

transformed into a traditional 1950s diner with its parking lot open for classic car cruise all day. Also featured will be prizes, an outdoor BBQ, outdoor concerts, celebrity impersonators, hula hoop and limbo contests, kids meals served in commemorative classic cars and more.

**Car cruises** are scheduled every Thursday from 6-8:30 p.m. during June, July and August. The event features outdoor music in the park with live concerts in the park featuring various bands each week, outdoor BBQ with the inn's famous slow roasted half chickens and a Cruiser of the Week in addition to 15 percent off all dine in food and non alcoholic



Photo courtesy of the Historic White Horse Inn

Staff enjoying themselves at the 2008 White Horse Annual Sock Hop.

beverages for cruisers.

**Carriage rides** are a wonderful way to mark a special occasion. They are offered in the summer months while horse drawn sleigh rides

and dinner packages begin the Saturday after Thanksgiving and are offered throughout the winter as weather permits. Rides wind through the charming community of Metamora.



■ Eighty years after the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel opens to automobile traffic

Prices were also much different 160 years ago. When Lorenzo Hoard opened the business as a restaurant, general store, stagecoach stop and boarding house, he charged 50 cents for overnight guests. He also paid just \$50 a year in taxes.

Times sure have changed, but one thing has remained consistent throughout the White Horse Inn's 160-year history – it has always operated as a restaurant. The business has been an integral part of the Metamora community. It was the place for residents to go chat with neighbors in the 1870s after watching the trains roll in to the Michigan Central Railroad depot and getting their mail.

Today neighbors and visitors still gather in the historic building for good conversation and a hot, savory meal. It is also where special occasions are celebrated and good news is shared.

*Congratulations* WHITE HORSE INN  
on your 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.  
**May you have many more successful years!**

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

## HISTORIC WHITE HORSE INN 160TH BIRTHDAY

## Fine dining within a timeless atmosphere

By JANE PETERSON  
Special to The Oakland Press

The Historic White Horse Inn is more than a restaurant in a small town – it is a dining destination. While its historical roots run deep, owners Tim and Lisa Wilkins are always updating the menu to include seasonal produce, respond to customers' changing tastes and reflect emerging trends.

The Wilkins' have also put their stamp on the business by opening Miss Lucy's Tearoom, Parlor and Gift Shop and offering a Cooking School with southern chef and teacher Patricia Hackney, a Metamora resident. A recent Cooking School program featured some of Hackney's favorite garden dishes, lunch and a recipe book.

Miss Lucy's Tearoom is located upstairs in the White Horse Inn. Afternoon luncheon tea is offered every Saturday from 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. It is open daily with a reservation of eight adults or more. The menu features a wide variety of flavored loose teas, tea sandwiches, fruit-filled breads and scones, cream and preserves. Cost is \$14.95 for adults and \$8.95 for children 10 and under.

Theme teas are available each month. Upcoming events include an American Girl Tea for girls 10 and under on July 17; a Grandmothers Tea on Aug. 21 and the Annual Harvest Tea on Sept. 18.

Open for lunch and dinner, the White Horse Inn is known for its Old Fashioned Country Style Brunch every Sunday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Menu items include favorites like country chicken stew with biscuits, cinnamon French toast with Michigan maple syrup,

brown sugar spiral ham, chicken Santa Fe pasta and much more. Cost is \$9.95 for adults and \$6.95 for children ages 10 and under. Children under age 2 are free.

Other specials include Dinner for 2 for \$22.22 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-5 p.m. and Wednesdays from 2-9 p.m. The dinner is quite a bargain as each entrée includes soup, slaw or salad; a warm bread and butter basket; choice of potato; roasted garden vegetables; and a glass of house wine, draft beer or soft drink. Entrée choices currently include grilled skewered shrimp, maple mustard glazed pork chop, pasta alfredo, Monterey chicken, pasta Provencal, Fox Hunt salad, Caesar salad with chicken and the White Horse Inn's fish and chips although selections may change without notice.

The Historic White Horse Inn is located at 1 E. High St. in



Photos by DAVID REED

There's a tasty reason why the Historic White Horse Inn has been a restaurant for the past 160 years, delicious lunch and dinner meals. A recent addition is Miss Lucy's tea Room, bottom right, which features an afternoon tea luncheon on Saturdays.

Metamora, a community located just five minutes north of Oxford off of Dryden Road, east of Lapeer Road. Lunch is served from 11:30 a.m.-4

p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and dinner hours are 4-9 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and noon-8 p.m. Sunday. The restaurant is closed on

Mondays.

The White Horse Inn offers dine-in, carry out and catering services. For more information, call (810) 678-2150, email

info@historicwhitehorseinn.com or visit www.historicwhitehorseinn.com and www.misslucystearam.com. Reservations are always accepted.

## Tasty recipes that have passed the test of time

By JANE PETERSON  
Special to The Oakland Press

While it's true that people choose a restaurant because of excellent service and comfortable ambiance, when it comes down to it, the food is what keeps customers coming back. At the White Horse Inn, they've had 160 years to perfect their menu so they offer nothing but the best, freshest lunch and dinner entrees.

Some items are tried and true, part of the culture and always on the menu. Such items include the inn's homemade bread pudding that was a dessert served when the restaurant opened in 1850 and is still served at the White Horse today. In fact, it is the restaurant's most popular dessert item, say current owners Tim and Lisa Wilkins.

The White Horse Inn currently prepares a French Toast recipe from the early 1900s that is served at its Old Fashion Country Style Sunday Brunch. The Wilkins' share the recipe as well as an 1850 Bread Pudding recipe below.

The White Horse Inn is also known for its famous Fish and Chip "all you care to eat" dinners. These are served at the restaurant everyday and all day. In 1850, the year the White Horse was founded as the Hoard House, the great British fish and chip trade grew out of existing small businesses which sold fish and chips separately in the streets and alleys of London and some of Britain's industrial towns.

The Wilkins' are proud that the White Horse Inn continues to carry on this fine tradition today.

Customers are familiar with many of the products served at the inn because they are items that have been around just about as long it has. From Vernors, a combination of 19 ingredients like ginger, vanilla and natural flavorings sold since 1862 and cinnamon, chocolate and vanilla milkshakes that surged in popularity in the mid-1880s to Coca-Cola, available since 1886 and old-fashioned cobbler that was first referred to in American dictionaries in 1859, the White Horse Inn serves them all.

The menu has a solid foundation built on quality products and fresh ingredients. The White Horse Inn features local Michigan produce whenever available and organic greens in all its salads.

Daily specials take advantage of fresh, local resources like Hamtramck pierogies and broiled Michigan whitefish with glazed gulf shrimp.

Regular dinner menu selections include bruschetta pasta, New Orleans shrimp jambalaya, BBQ St. Louis style ribs, bourbon steak and the White Horse Signature Salad, a hearty salad prepared with organic greens and topped with grilled chicken, apples, Michigan dried cherries, glazed walnuts and the inn's own warm, maple mustard dressing.

For lunch, check out the wide variety of tavern sandwiches, like twin

tenderloin sliders with grilled onions and horseradish cream; "A Big Fat" Blarney Burger topped with corned beef, slaw, Swiss cheese and house dressing; and the house made crabcake sandwich with mozzarella and mustard sauce.

Loyal customers know to leave room for luscious desserts like Westview Orchard's apple pie served with Ray's cinnamon ice cream and a Michigan Sundae topped with Sander's hot fudge and caramelized candied walnuts. Ray's ice cream is from Royal Oak and Sander's hot fudge is from Detroit. When in season, strawberries come from Romeo and Michigan apples are used in the Apple/Cranberry Cobbler, a popular dessert item in the fall and winter.

As tastes change and new favorites emerge, so does the White Horse Inn menu. Consider this recipe from 1850 shared by the Wilkins':

**1850 Bread Pudding Recipe:**

"Take a stale five cent loaf of bread; cut off all the crust, and grate or rub the crumb as fine as possible. Boil a quart of rich milk, and pour it hot over the bread; then stir in a quarter of a pound of butter, and the same quantity of sugar, a glass of wine and brandy mixed, or a glass of rose water. Or you may omit the liquor and substitute the grated peel of a large lemon. Add a tablespoonful of mixed cinnamon and nutmeg powdered. Stir the whole very well, cover it, and set it away for half

an hour. Then let it cool. Beat seven or eight eggs very light, and stir them gradually into the mixture after it is cold. Then butter a deep dish, and bake the pudding an hour. Send it to the table cool."

— *Directions for Cookery in its Various Branches*, Miss Leslie (p.299)

**1926 French Toast**

Here's the French Toast Recipe from the early 1900s that the White Horse Inn currently uses today for the French Toast they serve at its White Horses' Old Fashion Country Style Sunday Brunch:

1 egg  
4 slices sandwich bread  
1/3 cup milk  
Sugar and cinnamon mixture  
Butter

Cut bread as for toast, without removing crust. Beat egg slightly, add milk. Dip bread slices with a fork into milk mixture, moistening well on both sides, not too wet. Cover bottom of a hot skillet one inch or more with hot or rendered butter. Brown moistened bread quickly as soon as dipped, first on one side then on the other in hot butter. Do not cook more than two or three slices at one time. If cooked too slowly, toast will be greasy. Drain and sprinkle while hot with confectioner's sugar and cinnamon mixed together.

— *Every Woman's Cook Book*, Mrs. Chas. F. Moritz

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

HISTORIC WHITE HORSE INN 160TH BIRTHDAY

# Historic White Horse Inn serves generous portions with rich past on display

Originally published in The Oakland Press on May 6, 2010

There's nothing like dining among history. At the Historic White Horse Inn in Metamora, you nibble on your salad and then look up to a shelf showcasing a pair of old riding boots. You spoon into crème brulée and hear whisperings of a resident ghost (friendly, of course). You chitchat among the din of creaking floors and kids scurrying through rooms, exploring vintage artifacts and photos.

The 160-year-old establishment (Michigan's oldest continually running restaurant) was originally a general store until Lorenzo Hoard purchased it in 1850 and turned it into the Hoard House, a restaurant and inn. Hoard was a former innkeeper in New York and also fought in the Civil War. During Prohibition, the name was changed to the White Horse Inn. Since then, the inn has had many owners, including the current ones — Tim and Lisa Wilkins, who've been running the show since 2001.

Just as wayfaring travelers of long ago enjoyed hearty meals here, patrons today also indulge in generous portions. Especially appealing: Side dishes and salads are not a la carte and are included in the entrée price.

Meaty St. Louis-Style Spareribs (\$15.95-18.95) come doused with tangy sauce and a heaping side dish of smashed potatoes (These filling spuds almost fill one third of the plate!) Typically, a vegetable such as corn, also complements entrees. As well, meals come with a "Fox Hunt" salad (or coleslaw or soup) that features Gorgonzola cheese, onions and more, topped with a poppy seed dressing (or you can request other dressings). All patrons receive a breadbasket brimming with crackers and hot, just-baked buttery bread with herbs. Speaking of herbs, cooks like to use them freely here and most dishes come peppered with a flurry of flecks of dried, green spices. Even the buttery corn side dish and smashed potatoes feature herbs.

The White Horse's signature High Street Scallops (\$21.95) come with a lemon-butter sauce with flecks of, what else? Herbs. The scallops (five) are seared to perfection — not too well done. A thick, juicy Tenderloin Filet Mignon (\$22.95) is for mushroom lovers and arrives with a large, grilled portobello mushroom cap and mushroom sauce with crispy onions.

Soup of the day might be something as substantial as beef vegetable, in which tender meat chunks are twice the size of a playing dice. Other draws include All You Can Eat Fish & Chips (\$11.95), offered daily; Grilled Baby Lamb Chops (\$24.95) and

## Nomadic Nibbler Review: Historic White Horse Inn

★★★ 1/2 out of 4 stars

**HOURS:** Tuesday through Thursday 11:30 am to 9 pm; Friday and Saturday 11:30 am to 10 pm; Sunday Brunch 10 am to 1 pm; Sunday Lunch/Dinner 12:30 pm to 8 pm; Closed Monday. Miss Lucy's Tearoom Luncheon Tea, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday  
**PRICES:** Appetizers, \$7.95-13.95; salads, \$6.95-13.95; burgers and sandwiches, \$7.95-8.95; entrées, \$13.95-24.95

**CREDIT CARDS:** All major**LIQUOR:** Full bar**PARKING:** Adjacent lot**RESERVATIONS:** Suggested**GIFT CERTIFICATES:** Can be purchased by phone.**LOCATION:** 1 E. High Street (Dryden Road), Metamora, MI 48455**CONTACT US:**Call 810-678-2150 or visit [www.historicwhitehorseinn.com](http://www.historicwhitehorseinn.com); [www.misslucystearam.com](http://www.misslucystearam.com); [www.wilkinshg.com](http://www.wilkinshg.com)

Bourbon Steak (\$19.75, featuring bourbon peppercorn sauce with bleu cheese.) Pasta dishes also entice and range from chicken mushroom linguini (\$15.95) to bruschetta pasta (\$14.95), which overflows with Roma tomatoes, green olives and peppers in a zesty olive oil sauce. Pasta dishes can be enhanced with shrimp, salmon, chicken, tuna or scallops.

Depending on a diner's mood, two seating areas await. One is more casual and shares space with a small pub area. The other is more light-filled and elegant — a nice spot



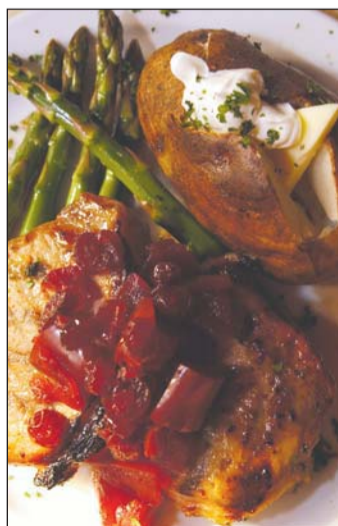
Oakland Press file photo/JOSE JUAREZ

In the foreground is the Filet Mignon. At top left is the High Street Scallops. At top right is the Grilled Baby Lamb Chops.

to bring family for the eatery's country-style Sunday brunches.

Upstairs, Miss Lucy's Tearoom, parlor and gift shop draw tea lovers. Luncheon teas are on tap every Saturday. Wherever you sit at the White Horse, there's plenty to ogle, including woodcarvings, fox-hunting photographs and street-scene pictures taken long ago. Come warm weather, the inn also offers horse-drawn carriage rides with dinner (special dine & ride packages range in price; winter sleigh rides also thrill).

Whether you're sampling teas, enjoying main entrees or stopping in for lunch, don't skip dessert. The inn's homemade apple pie (\$5.95) gets rave reviews, thanks to its Romeo-grown apples from nearby Westwood

Oakland Press file photo  
Maple Glazed Pork Chops.Oakland Press file photo  
Honey BBQ Grilled King Salmon.

**Congratulations to the Historic White Horse Inn on your 160th Anniversary!**

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Orchards. This heavenly salute to America is hard to top, unless one opts for an a la mode (\$1.95) version with Ray's (handmade in Royal Oak) cinnamon ice cream. The "fat" chocolate cake (\$6.95) is to die for and truly is fat, about four inches high and dripping with fudgy frosting. Also perfection: crème brulée (\$5.95), served in an oblong dish — no skimping here.