

Family establishment

Alton restaurant recognized as Business of the Month

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By FRED POLLARD

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ALTON - Alfie's Restaurant and Sports Grill has been recognized as the River Bend Growth Association Business of the Month for July.

"We want to thank (the RBGA) for their support," co-owner Nancy Sanders said. "They hold meetings here and we really appreciate that. We really appreciate this award too, of course."

For the past five years, Alfie's has provided a full-menu, family-oriented restaurant as well as a sports bar featuring drink specials and large-screen televisions.

Husband and wife team Al and Nancy Sanders opened the restaurant in January 2004.

"I have been in the restaurant business since I was 18," Al Sanders said.

"We had always wanted to do this," Nancy said. "We thought this building would be a great place to open a family-friendly establishment, which this area really needed."

Along with a wide variety of burgers and sandwiches, Alfie's also offers specialty sandwiches such as the firehouse chicken tender sandwich, beer-battered cod, and French dip roast beef.

Customers wanting a classy sit-down meal can choose from the grill menu, which includes New York strip and bleu cheese sirloin steaks, lemon dill salmon and provolone chicken.

The restaurant also offers a full child's menu.

"Kids eat free every Wednesday, we have games here to keep them entertained, and every child leaves with a balloon," Nancy said.

For those wanting to stop by for a drink and catch a game with friends, appetizers such as chicken wings and mozzarella sticks really can hit the spot. Alfie's also offers some unusual menu items, such as fried green beans which are lightly coated, deep-fried, and served with ranch dipping sauce.

Al and Nancy Sanders have been married for 15 years and have four children. Nancy says having a family-owned and -operated business provides the opportunity for the family to spend time together at the restaurant.

"Our kids pitch in," she said. "We do this as a team. Some customers really think it's neat to come in on a Saturday night and see our kids working here with us."

Creating its own extended family, the restaurant employs 20 to 25 employees at any given time.

"We have a strong crew," Al said. "Some of them have been with us since we opened."

"We haven't had to lay anyone off, which we are really happy about," Nancy added. "We could not do this without our team."

Like most business owners these days, Al and Nancy Sanders are set to dig in their heels during the area's leaner times and focus on providing their customers with the best food and the best service possible.

"Right now, fighting the current economy can be challenging," Al said. "We are hoping the addition of a theater at the mall will stimulate the growth of the surrounding area."

To provide the most convenience for its customers, Alfie's offers services such as a private meeting room for business meetings and events, an outdoor patio for up to 35 people, fax orders for offices ordering from the lunch menu, and a pickup window.

"People seem to really like our carry-out window," Nancy said. "They love the convenience."

The owners soon also will be adding a full pizza menu as well as several additional pasta items.

Alfie's is open 11 a.m. until 10 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays, and Fridays and Saturdays until 11 p.m. Through August, kids eat free every day. Monday nights feature all-you-can-eat pasta, and all-you-can-eat prime rib dinners are available every Saturday. To inquire about daily lunch and drink specials, call (618) 208-3290.