



CARROL COPELAND • TIMES RECORD

**Sous chef Josh Cobb**, left, and executive chef John Hankins prepare food for supper at Emmy's German Restaurant June 17. The restaurant is located in the former Hall at Talianos.

# Emmy's Returns

*Family Friend Buys, Reopens  
Popular German Restaurant*

## Emmy's German Restaurant

200 N. 13th St.  
Fort Smith, AR 72901  
(479) 242-3669

Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 5 to 9 p.m.  
<http://www.emmystoo.com/>

BY TOM MORELAND

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES RECORD

**A** Fort Smith dining institution, Emmy's German Restaurant is up and running again after what appeared a few years ago to be a permanent closure.

Located in what originally was a Methodist church building on North 13th Street, Emmy's is now owned and operated by Joe Calderera.

And, yes, it has the very same dishes that Al and Emmy Thome served for more than 40 years.

"Emmy was a dear friend of mine," Calderera said. He stated that he came to know both Al and Emmy from working in the restaurant business in Fort Smith.

When Emmy died in September 2007, Caldarera said, he approached Al's sister, Susan Lindsey, who had traveled from Illinois for her sister-in-law's funeral and helped settle the Thome estate. He inquired about purchasing their original recipes.

The family agreed to sell the recipes to Caldarera, which led to the restaurant's resurrection.

But acquiring the rights to the recipes was not in itself sufficient to revive such a storied eatery, according to Caldarera.

"There are a lot of different ways you can cook a recipe," he said. "Some of the recipes were just handwritten in German."

That's where Mike Skriba comes in.

Caldarera said that Skriba and Al were best friends and he worked in the kitchen with Al and Emmy.

"Mike has firsthand knowledge of how the recipes were supposed to be prepared," he said.

Caldarera, along with partner Jim Cadelli, bought The Hall at Taliano's from his father, Tom Caldarera, in February 2009 to house the restaurant.

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### **JOE CALDARERA**

Owner,  
Emmy's German Restaurant

Furthermore, he brought Skriba on board to oversee meal preparation.

Evidently, Caldarera's efforts have been fruitful.

On a recent visit, the Sauerbraten Mit Kartoffel Klosse (marinated beef with potato dumplings) was still delicious.

However, those with less exotic tastes should find comfort in knowing that the

Hunter Style Chicken is still on the menu as well.

In fact, Emmy's offers Kinder (Kids) Items featuring more child-friendly fare like chicken strips and fries.

All entrees are served with Al's Special Recipe Homemade Potato Soup, a garden salad, fried potatoes and red cabbage.

The rebirth of Emmy's has elicited fond memories of the original restaurant from longtime city residents.

A popular recollection is of Emmy's mother at the cash register counting out the change in German.

"Everybody called her 'Mutti,'" Caldarera said.

Mutti is German for Mommy.

The endearing story of how Emmy Werner, a native of Offenbach, married Al, a U.S. serviceman stationed in Germany, in 1952 is related on the back of the restaurant's menu. To make a long story short, their marriage eventually led them to Fort Smith, much to the delight of generations of palates.

Thanks to some enterprising restaurateurs and a seasoned cook, future generations also will enjoy that delight. ■