

Sage Room – old school dining with modern flare



The Sage Room at Harveys is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

STATELINE – Frog legs sautéed with tomatoes, onion, garlic, basil, Kalamata olives and white wine; mushroom raviolis with a portabella-black truffle Marsala sauce; Steak Dianne, flambéed tableside with filet mignon, mushrooms, demi glaze and flaming brandy. These are just a few of the everyday delicacies served at the Sage Room inside Harvey's Lake Tahoe.

Celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, the Sage Room has

been adorning tables with fine Tahoe cuisine since 1947.

Just walking into the Sage Room feels like a step back in time. The lighting is low, wood graces the walls and ceiling, and deep burgundy covers the tables and chairs creating a warm and intimate atmosphere. The hand-hewn wood beams crisscrossing the ceiling came from the original Harvey's Wagon Wheel Saloon and Gambling Hall opened in 1944 by Harvey and Llewellyn Gross. Just a few years after the Sage Room opened the local Washoe tribe gave the Grosses a gift of beautiful hand-made Native American lampshades which still hang from the ceiling today.



Sage Room maitre d' Ozzie Sanchez makes a show whipping up some Cafe Diablo. He has been with the Sage Room for two decades. Photo/Jessie

Marchesseau

Diners are offered a selection of traditional steakhouse fare and unique gourmet dishes. Several of the signature dishes are prepared tableside including the Steak Dianne, the Caesar salad with house-made croutons, a flaming cherries jubilee, and the crowd-pleasing café diablo, where blue flames of Grand Marnier travel up curling rinds of lemons and oranges. The servers preparing these dishes are both skilled and entertaining, often joking as they pour and sauté, eliciting applause from throughout the dining room with their showy preparations. But it's not just the food, the ambiance and tableside shows which keep diners coming back year after year.

"We strive big time to make everyone feel like family," said Ozzie Sanchez, matre d' for the restaurant, who said on any given night he gives out a plethora of hugs to regular customers and sometimes even new ones.

The Sage Room's staff is attentive, knowledgeable and experienced, many of them having been part of the team for decades. "We look for solutions, no matter what," Sanchez said.



The Washoe tribe donated these chandeliers to the Sage Room nearly 70 years ago. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

Teddy Herrera who prepared a tableside Caesar salad and Steak Dianne for a room of hungry media representatives last Thursday has been working at the Sage Room for 30 years.

“This is my second home here,” Herrera said. “I have so many customers and so many experiences here. They take care of me.”

And it’s not just lip service. Herrera named his youngest son Sage, in honor of his “second home.”

“That’s how much I love this place,” he said.

As he squeezed fresh lemons, fired up steaks and served up tapa-sized dishes for his afternoon guests, Herrera’s skill and enjoyment in his task was apparent.

The same could be said watching Evan Derdowski cooking up the sweet-tart cherries jubilee: setting the pan of juicy fruit

aflame, then sprinkling in some cinnamon to make sparks fly. And the show was, of course, topped off with a luscious dessert of cherry caramel drizzled over vanilla ice cream alongside warm, juicy cherries.

The Sage Room, after 70 years, is offering up more than just food, it's a true dining experience.

In celebration of this 70th anniversary, the Sage Room is has put together a special fixed-price dining option in addition to its regular menu which will be available through the end of the year.