

TALBOT RESTAURANT WEEK SET FOR MARCH 21-28

EASTON-Talbot County, whose reputation as a dining destination has grown well beyond its Eastern Shore locale, is joining communities across the country by celebrating the popular culinary trend known as Restaurant Week.

More than 20 restaurants in Easton, Oxford, St. Michaels, Tilghman and Trappe have signed on to participate in the week-long event debuting in late March.

Restaurant Week began in the early 1990s in New York City and the concept-a cooperative effort among usually fierce competitors to provide gourmet dining experiences at bargain prices-caught on so quickly that it has been adopted by many areas as an annual "shoulder season" event.

Locally, Restaurant Week kicks off on Sunday, March 21, at The Oaks (formerly the Pasadena Inn) with "Celebrate Talbot! Sample, Sip & Savor," a four-hour food- and wine-tasting of the best treats that chefs and vintners have to offer. "Celebrate Talbot!" is from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. and costs \$35 per person. This event is sponsored by the Talbot County Office of Tourism in partnership with the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce.

Although food is the main course of Restaurant Week, music and cinema are special side dishes. As part of the celebration, diners can enjoy the annual Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition on Saturday, March 27, at the Avalon Theatre in downtown Easton.

Restaurant Week closes on Sunday, March 28, with a special screening of the 1996 award-winning film "Big Night." Set in the Fifties, the drama tells the story of two brothers struggling to open a successful restaurant. The event begins at 5 p.m. inside the Historical Society of Talbot County auditorium on Washington Street in Easton. The film will be followed by food, beverages and music by the Talbot Jazz Collective. The event, which costs \$75 per person, is a fundraiser for the third Chesapeake Film Festival, set this year in late September.

From Monday, March 22, through Saturday, March 27, restaurants will offer special two-course lunches for \$20.10 and three-course dinners for \$30.10. This gastronomic festival gives Talbot's inventive chefs a chance to showcase their skills to a broader clientele and provides patrons the opportunity to sample new dishes and settings.

As a bonus, Restaurant Week diners can visit county museums free of charge from 1 to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Five finalists will compete live on stage for more than \$15,000 in prizes during the annual Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition. Restaurant Week diners who attend the March 27 1 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. performances will receive coupons for a chance to win concert tickets.

"Talbot County is already known for its cuisine and its arts," said Tourism Director Debbi Dodson, "and it makes perfect sense to pair the two for our

inaugural Restaurant Week. This is about the dining experience, but it's also about how the various businesses and non-profits are willing to form a partnership to promote and make affordable a great bargain for our visitors and residents."

For more information, contact the Talbot Tourism Office at 410-770-8000 or visit www.tourtalbot.org or www.diningtalbot.com.