

Copper Stallion brings British flair to holidays



Terry and Joni Light, owners of the Copper Stallion in Sturbridge. (T&G Staff/TOM RETTIG)

By Barbara M. Houle
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Happy Thanksgiving!

More celebrations are around the corner.

If you enjoy the December holiday season with all its glorious food and traditions, head out to the Copper Stallion, 538 Main St., Route 20, Fiskdale.

I should tell you that reservations are recommended, especially if you plan to attend one of the special dinners.

The restaurant and pub, owned and operated by Joni and Terry Light for six years, offers traditional British food, such as Cottage Pie (ground sirloin, vegetables top with garlic mashed potatoes, gravy and cheese), British Prime

Rib with Yorkshire Pudding (made fresh daily) and Bangers and Mash.

Terry Light is from England, and his wife said she looks to his family and other British friends for recipes to use during Christmas. So far, so good, she said.

The restaurant menu also touches upon American and European cuisine.

Terry Light said, "Dinner salads, such as Shrimp Cobb, Black & Bleu and our signature Huntsman, are popular with guests. On Sundays, we offer a prime rib sandwich, which sells out very quickly, and a quiche of the day."

Ye Olde Fish & Chips, \$9.95, is under British classics on the menu. There's even a brief history of chip shops, or "chippies," as they relate to Britain's food culture.

There also are burgers and chicken, seafood and pasta dishes, plus homemade salad dressings and soups.

If you're reading the column before the Big Meal, you must be pretty hungry by now. I'm writing in advance of the holiday, so I might be heading to the fridge before I get to the last item in the column.

More about the Copper Stallion and its owners:

Joni Light is a self-taught cook who has studied different cuisines, taking advance cooking and technique classes whenever she can. "I have a lot of cooking experience coming from a large family."

Terry Light managed a pub in England before coming to the United States. "Terry has experience tending bar, the old-fashioned way, and knows the proper technique for pouring a Guinness," said Joni Light.

Most of the draught beers served at the Copper Stallion are European, with the exception of Sam Adams, she said, adding, "We're very specific about keeping our beers at proper temperature and clean our taps weekly to keep the taste crisp and clean."

If you visit www.copperstallion.com, you'll learn that the Lights are strong supporters of local growers, and they list the farms and orchards that supply them with seasonal products.

Light said Ed Stearns Dressed Meats in Charlton makes sausages for the Copper Stallion, following a family recipe that traces back to Cumberland

County in the northwest of England.

“Christmas Around the British Isles” is a December dinner series at the restaurant that runs Thursday through Sunday.

Three-course meals, which change each week, range from \$25 to \$28 per person. Welsh Christmas, Scottish Christmas and English Christmas are featured. Call the restaurant, (508) 347-2100, for more information.

“We decorate the restaurant in traditional holiday décor, and we’ll celebrate Hogmanay on Dec. 31 instead of New Year’s Eve,” said Light.

“Hogmanay is the Scots word for the last day of the year. It is equal to the traditional New Year celebrations. Hogmanay has developed uniquely around Scotland with local customs taking on their own ritual,” added Light.

Outside of the restaurant, Joni Light raises and shows Irish wolfhounds. The couple have five children.

Restaurant hours: Lunch: noon to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays. Dinner: 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays; 5 to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 5 to 8 p.m. Sundays. The bar remains open until 11 p.m. weekdays and midnight Fridays and Saturdays.

The restaurant seats 50. An outside deck is used seasonally.

FYI: Light said The Copper Stallion is located in one of the oldest buildings in town. On the restaurant website, the owners write, “Our sign hangs over our second floor deck, and if you’re not looking up, you’ll probably miss it. The entrance is also somewhat hidden. It’s up the hill in the northwest corner of the parking lot. Our regulars tell us we’re the best kept secret in town!”

The restaurant is handicapped accessible.