

Colton's Owners Open Sophisticated Saddle Creek Woodfired Grill

By Chip Taulbee

Arkansas Business - 1/24/05

SADDLE CREEK WOODFIRED GRILL

Owner: Hand-cut Steaks of Lakewood Village

Address: 2703 Lakewood Village, North Little Rock 72116

Phone: (501) 812-0883

Fax: (501) 812-0470

Hours: 4-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 4-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday

Startup: Dec. 15, 2004

E-mail: saddlecreek@sbcglobal.net

Web site: www.saddlecreekwoodfiredgrill.com

When Bobby Fain and the other owners of Hand-cut Steaks of Lakewood Village wanted a restaurant a bit more intimate than the Colton's Steak House and Grills they own, they turned west. All the way to Montana, actually.

That's the theme of their newest project, North Little Rock's Saddle Creek Woodfired Grill, whose décor is based on an old Montana lodge.

Dixie Bratcher, Saddle Creek's director of marketing, said that while Colton's was more family-gearred, Saddle Creek has a more formal feel.

"We wanted something with a nice, cozy environment and nice plate presentation," Bratcher said.

Bratcher also said Saddle Creek has an atmosphere that focuses more on women.

That is not to say the restaurant is without a masculine touch. A rancher might feel at home here, but only if he were sophisticated. Multiple fireplaces and an antique-looking bar give the restaurant its Big-Sky-country feel, and the food matches the atmosphere.

Steaks, seafood and pizza are grilled over hickory- and oak-fired flames. The nighttime restaurant also offers a wide array of salads, sandwiches, appetizers and pastas. A children's menu is available for diners 10 and younger.

Saddle Creek's bar offers a versatile wine menu and an extensive martini list. And two private dining rooms are available — the cigar-friendly Lewis Room and the smoke-free Clark Room — for banquets, receptions, seminars and private meetings. The restaurant can seat more than 300.

Scott Shaffer, the restaurant's proprietor, leads a crew of more than 100 employees that includes executive chef Ken Weis, service manager Angie Steed and bar manager Suzanne Jones.