

“North Fork Food Trail”

A Recollection by Joel Reitman

Here I am wishing I could go back in time and do a phantom food tour of this wondrous place I call home, Southold, New York. What say we do just that? Come with me, hop in my car and off we shall go down a historic look at what was and what I now call the ‘North Fork Food Trail.’ Heard of the wine trail? Well on the this trail you feast on food not wine. So, it’s turn the key, release the clutch, step on the gas, hit the FM button and listen to Frankie Vali as we go east.

First stop on Route 48, or is it Middle Road, or maybe ‘the North Road’.... okay, that’s enough; it’s another story. Our first stop is Hubba Hubba. Well, that’s long gone, turned into Johnny’s Drive In. There once was a real Saturday Fever night feeling here. But it isn’t Johnny’s anymore. It’s Erik’s Breakfast and Lunch. I don’t miss the car hops when the food is this good.

Next down the road is Ross’s North Fork Restaurant. That one I really miss, as well as the next interpretation which was O’Mally’s. Now, it’s Señor Taco. No comment on the food as it hasn’t opened as of this writing.

But don’t get out of the car yet. We headed head down the road to another Ross’s. But it’s gone too, and is now called the Rotisserie and John Ross doesn’t own it. Oh well, sit tight, we will yet find Ross restaurant, after it’s ‘Farm to table’ right John?

Hang on tight, we are turning down Youngs Avenue to, to Founders Tavern. Wasn’t that where the original Ross North fork Restaurant was located? Yes, and it’s across the street from the Grateful Deli, which was once my kids favorite eatery as Ropin’ Roys. Of course, prior to that it was The Quiet Man. But did you know what it was before all those restaurants? The Eagle Hook and Ladder Company.

West of these two eateries is Maroni’s, now open for eating inside after all the COVID restrictions. They took over the space when Jeni moved her Main Street Grill to an unused space near Hashamomuck Pond. Do you remember the Sea Shell Restaurant that was there before? It was followed by Cimini’s Italian Restaurant, then the Six Three One Diner and then Jeni’s Bistro. Across the street was Pepi’s, which is now Waypoint. PHEW.

I’m getting hungry aren’t you. Which one will you pic - Michelangelo’s in Cutchogue, the Old Barge, Fisherman’s Rest, Caci, or the Rhumb Line in Greenport? All gone too. All those great places are gone, things change, but there are lots of great places taking their place. Just hit the North Fork Food Trail and try them out. Maybe you will let me know your favorite.

(Note: We realize there are other restaurants that have been around and are not included here. These are the reminiscences of the writer.)