

Support Local Businesses

Enjoy A Special Diner



Every great small town needs a local diner, and the **Four Seasons** community is very lucky to have the Paramount Diner on Main Street in Manasquan.

This diner is a local treasure, and it is not hard to see and feel the reasons. The Paramount dates back to 1931. For over 80 years it has been a great spot to have a tasty, solid home-style meal and enjoy local camaraderie. There have been a number of different owners through the years. It was most recently purchased by Mike and Linda Smith in April of 2023. They love the Jersey Shore and cherish this local treasure.

Mike had been a customer of the diner for 45 years and stopped by for his coffee and breakfast just about every single day. He now goes in around 6:30 a.m. every morning so he can make sure there is a hot cup of coffee for his customers when the diner opens at 7:00 a.m. Since the couple has owned the diner, he has missed going in just twice.

His philosophy for his "baby" is a throwback to the old days and a reflection of his life. "I want to have great food," explained Mike without any hesitation. "I want to have reasonable prices ... below market prices. I want to have a family atmosphere. And I guarantee that if you come in, you will surely know somebody."

The 69-year old Brielle resident was one of nine children. He always worked hard, in his first career as a member of the Brielle Police force and later as a Mrs. Smith Pie salesman where he delivered baked goods and pies to local businesses. Mike's life experiences



Mike Smith, owner of the Paramount Diner

had prepared him for retirement, but his love of people is probably why he bought the Paramount, and he looks forward to starting each new day with an adventure there. His pride oozes out at what the diner provides to his customers, friends and the community.

"I just love every moment of it," explained Mike as he worked on solving the problem of a broken dishwasher. "It's about people. The locals and regulars all have great stories. And I want to treat everyone like part of the family."

The Paramount is built on homemade food and includes "from scratch" soups that are extremely well-liked. The cook's split pea soup is a customer favorite and seems to sell out every time it is offered. The sandwiches are also very popular and include roast beef, turkey and other specialties, all roasted right in their kitchen. Mike is exceptionally proud of the organic Vermont syrup which he brought into the diner to complement their popular pancakes.

The high prices of food and inflation have not found their way to the dinner. "The costs are up, but we are holding the line for now," he explained. "I have not raised our prices. I had a little margin."

The menu is classic diner with a small number of twists. Besides the delicious pancakes, the place features waffles, French toast and a very large assortment of omelet and egg dishes. The side orders seem endless with turkey sausage, pork roll, bacon, corn beef hash, kielbasa, pork sausage, and Canadian bacon, plus others. Of course, there is also an assortment of pastries and muffins.

The rest of the menu is very extensive with a variety of salads and sandwiches, plus plenty of specials. Mike definitely wanted to celebrate Valentine's Day and the Valentine's Day specials were still popular days after the holiday. All of the desserts are good, but the pumpkin pie is a favorite of many customers. Every now and then a couple of customers "cheat" and have the pie and whip cream for breakfast.

A major attraction for the diner is the friendly staff. Mike has made sure he has a good mix of waitresses who want to do everything they can to make the meal a pleasant experience. Mike is also quick to lend a helping hand by pouring that extra cup of coffee, refilling a soda or just making sure that everyone is enjoying his new venture.

The Paramount is located at 130 Main Street. Mike has the coffee ready by 7:00 a.m. and closes up for the day at 3:00 p.m.

~Jim Lampariello
Photos by Jim Lampariello