

TRAVELS WITH ELIZABETH

The Musso and Frank Grill

BY ELIZABETH GANN
Mountain Travel Club

The first time my grandfather told me his favorite restaurant was in Hollywood, I was more than a little shocked. After all, Grandpa was a lifelong Baptist preacher and missionary. Just what exactly was he doing in Hollywood?

It only took one visit in the late 1980s with him to completely understand and appreciate his devotion that resulted in long drives to Hollywood on Saturday nights to have dinner at Musso and Frank Grill. Located on Hollywood Boulevard, Musso's—the oldest restaurant in Hollywood—has served countless actors, writers, directors and just regular folks since 1919. Musso and Frank Grill is a legend in and of itself.

You can feel the history of old Hollywood oozing through the cracks the minute you step in the door. The waiters (almost all past retirement age) in red jackets, the original wallpaper (visibly in need of restoration), the comfy, inviting red leather booths, each spot (even at the counter) adorned with impeccable linens, the elaborate menus which are printed daily, a world-class mahogany bar serving famous martinis, heaping plates of fresh sourdough bread, accompanied by those favorite gold foil wrapped pats of butter on each table, all contribute to the overall unique ambiance you will never find anywhere else. Quality, familiarity and consistency you can depend on are all important ingredients in Musso and Frank Grill's success for the past 90 years.

One of my favorite things on the menu is their dinner salad with bleu cheese dressing. This is the salad by which I measure all others.

Whether it is the hard-boiled egg, real bleu cheese, beets (I don't even like beets), the precise way it is tossed so that each bite has the perfect amount of dressing, or a combination of all of the above, all other salads pale by comparison. Each day, Tuesday through Saturday, there is a designated special entrée offered as well.

Marilyn Monroe, Jimmy Stewart, Humphrey Bogart, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and even Charlie Chaplin were all regular guests here. Charlie Chaplin's favorite booth is still the most requested one. Lots of Hollywood establishments claim to be frequented by celebrities. I happen to know first hand that Musso's actually is, having had the unexpected pleasure of meeting several through my years of dining here. In fact, I can't remember ever having dinner here and not noticing a star or two.

Once my mom was so distracted after spotting Raymond Burr (of Perry Mason fame) at the bar, I finally decided to take a chance and approach him. He could not have been more gracious, giving my mom a hug and leaving her with a story she shared with friends for years. One of my most memorable experiences was when, after walking by my table shared with friends and observing my big obvious smile, Kiefer Sutherland (of "24" fame) winked, paused, then decided to join us all briefly. This, needless to say, made my night. The greetings, handshakes and even hugs from artists you admire are part of the bonus you may receive from being a loyal patron at Musso and Frank Grill.

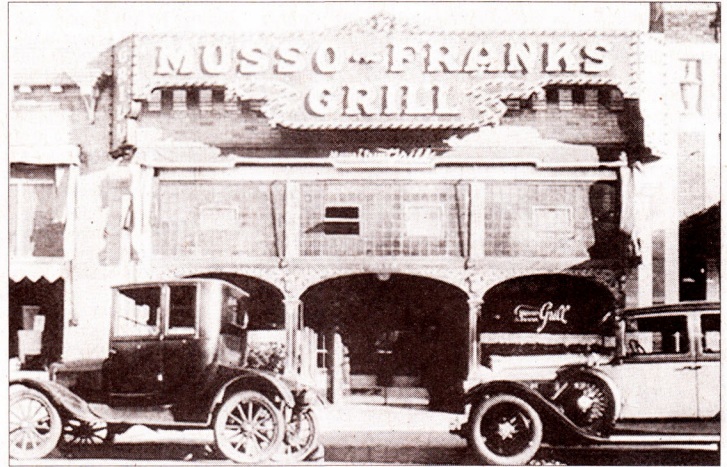
Cousins Jordan Jones and Mark Echeverria, both only 30 years old, have recently stepped in as the fourth-generation propri-

etors. They share the management responsibilities equally and oversee all aspects of the daily operations together. It was exciting to sit down with them recently and listen to their fond childhood memories of visits to Musso's, surrounded by their families. Jordan always looked forward to coming here as he knew his grandmother would always bring him a huge bowl full of all the cherries he could eat and whipped cream. Never being allowed sweets at home, Jordan knew his mom would look the other way and not spoil this treat on these special occasions.

It was more than a little refreshing to hear that Mark and Jordan both share a focus and priority for their family legacy. They are equally passionate and determined to continue to protect and preserve all that Musso and Frank has represented for decades. The changes they have implemented this past year are minimal. They have expanded the wine list to include some of their favorite Napa Valley wines and have added music for the first time in the restaurant's history. But not just any music; only the genre in keeping with the old Hollywood theme of a bygone era.

Simply said, this is not a restaurant to be missed. Even Grandpa knew it was a cool place to be. If he was still here, I have no doubt he would have continued to be a regular diner at Musso's, but only on Saturday nights, when his favorite entrée—braised shortribs—is still the featured special.

Musso and Frank Grill, which serves American/Continental cuisine, is located at 6667 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, CA 90028. The restaurant is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; the bar is open until 2 a.m. on Friday and Saturday. Their phone number is (323) 467-7788



Musso and Frank Grill in its earlier days.

MARTA Drivers Must Report Accidents

BY MIKE HARRIS
Reporter

Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority (MARTA) bus drivers are mandated to report all accidents to the organization, and each report is investigated by a supervisor or the operations manager, Kathy Hawksford, MARTA's general manager and CEO, said.

Hawksford was responding to a call received by this newspaper from a rider who alleged that a MARTA bus was involved in an accident earlier this year and that the incident was not reported.

The incident that the rider called about was reported and investigated, Hawksford said. It was a case where a car backed into one of MARTA's buses. "It was minor," Hawksford said, "but it was reported."

All bus drivers are required to report any accident, and each bus has forms



KATHY HAWKSFORD

report accidents.

"All drivers are supposed to report every accident, no matter how minor," Hawksford said. "In fact, even if they have an unusual experience, drivers are to file reports."

Once an accident report is investigated, and if there is a claim or damage, it is then sent on to MARTA's insurance carrier.

Hawksford said MARTA is vigilant about driver training. "Bylaw drivers receive

ing each year," she said.

Any organization providing training must be certified by the state, "and we are certified," she added. "We are very safety conscious."

Should anyone have a claim against MARTA, Hawksford said, they should report it by calling MARTA's Big Bear office and speak with Betty Ann Merrill, administrative assistant and clerk of the board. Merrill will take pertinent information, explain the process to the caller, inform management, and submit the claim to MARTA's insurance company, Hawksford said. The forms on board MARTA buses are strictly for the driver's use.

MARTA provides local and Dial-a-Ride bus service to Crestline, Lake Arrowhead, Running Springs and Big Bear Valley, and off-the-mountain service to San Bernardino.

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