



The Hidden Cove is a Hidden Gem

by Katie O'Sullivan

Not everyone knows about it. Which adds to the allure.

One of the best deals for lunch on Cape Cod can be found during the school year at the Hidden Cove Restaurant, located at Cape Cod Technical High School (CCT), 351 Pleasant Lake Avenue in Harwich. You'll find high quality food, attentive (if sometimes shy) service, and bargain-basement prices.

Most people don't realize that members of the public are welcomed as customers at the school. You can make hair appointments at the cosmetology school's shop, eat lunch at the Hidden Cove Restaurant, and shop for shrubs and flowers at the Roots and Roses greenhouse, which is powered by solar generators. All this at a fraction of the prices paid elsewhere on Cape Cod.

CCT offers seventeen different technical programs to its students, including Culinary Arts. During two-week shop cycles, students are under the close supervision of competent technical instructors who stress "safety as job one." Under the leadership of teachers Carolyn Freitas and Domenic Bachand, the culinary students learn by doing.



In Culinary Arts, students are exposed to food preparation, baking and pastry arts, table service and dining room management. They gain valuable hands-on experience and knowledge, preparing, cooking and serving a varying daily menu in a real restaurant to real customers.

The Bakeshop supplies desserts and rolls, fills custom cake orders, and stocks the retail bakery case located just outside the restaurant. Visitors can take home cakes, pies, breads and cookies at great prices. Students get hands-on experience with state of the art equipment and technology.

It all tastes good, and costs very little.

Bakery cookies are three for a dollar. Soup and salad or soup and half of a sandwich are served for \$4.00. The soup and sandwich choices are different each day, as are the choices of entrée.



Tables await hungry diners at The Hidden Cove.

Full entrees like shrimp scampi over cous cous, pulled pork sandwiches with homemade French fries, or beef stroganoff over rice can be enjoyed for \$5.00.

The restaurant operates during the school year, from September through May, but is closed during school vacations and snow days. Hidden Cove is open four days a week for lunch, Tuesday through Friday, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The menu changes daily, with special buffets offered occasionally. They don't take reservations, but hand out numbered tickets on a first-come, first serve basis. (We usually try to arrive before 11:30 when the weather is nice.) And they don't guarantee a private table. On crowded days, be prepared to share your table as seating is limited.

"One of the things I like about coming here is meeting new people," said a customer enjoying a special occasion buffet. A part-time Harwich resident, she said she likes to visit the restaurant when she's in town, whether or not she has a lunch companion. "I know they have the shared table arrangement. It's fun to talk with new people. Everyone always has good stories to tell."

The Culinary Arts department is nationally certified through the American Culinary Federation (ACF). Seniors have the opportunity to become ACF Secondary Graduates, as well as receive college credit at Johnson & Wales in Providence, Newbury College in Boston, and Tech Prep Programs at various Massachusetts Community Colleges. There are CCT culinary graduates at every major culinary college in the U.S., as well as already working in many Cape restaurants.

David Peninger is a Harwich resident and mother of three. Her oldest son is in his senior year at CCT, and has enjoyed his time in the culinary shop. "He's very happy with it. He's decided that this is the field he'd like to work in...I think the program gives the kids a good starting point for a culinary career," says David.

"Culinary requires more education than they're going to get in just high school," she acknowledges. "This program gives them a good core of skills and gives them a well-rounded view of the industry." In addition to their time in shop, the students carry a full academic course load, enabling students to attend the college of their choice.

Her son is currently looking at two colleges to continue his education in the culinary arts, including Johnson & Wales in Providence, Rhode Island.

"He's thrived at that high school," David says, "and thrived in this program. He used to be kind of a quiet kid, but now he's more sure of himself. He's got confidence in his abilities."

According to the [school's website](#), the major goal and emphasis of CCT is to provide the highest quality technical, academic and social education and training for each of their students, leading to successful employment in their chosen technical area or further technical and/or academic education.

CCT expects each of their students to be successful, and the school's staff will do all they can to help make that happen.



Katie O'Sullivan is the editor of this magazine. She lives and writes from her Harwich home, and enjoys lunch at The Hidden Cove as often as she can.

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